1.65
$1.10

Highwayman
Black Eyed Susan
Ballad of East & West – Kipling
Sally in our Alley
Wreck of the Hesperus
Barrel Organ
Salt Water Ballads –
River – Masefield

126
130
1
2
6
7
140
2
3
4

Read Prothylamus
Blanche Grobman
Simmons '38

66 Jones Rd
Beachmont, Mass.

BLANCHE GROBMAN
SIMMONS COLLEGE
66 JONES RD
BEACHMONT

Haslet
Canby
Sonnets
Page 100-101, 103, 137, 97
143, 187, 188, 324, 334
362, 422, 425,

Long theme
17th of May
Autobiography of a
6 yr old boy

Ballad meter 1234 123

Folk - serious

culture

Ballad - simplest possible form

Ballads - sophisticated, clever
complicated.

THE COLLEGE BOOK OF VERSE

1250–1925

COMPILED BY

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PREFACE

College courses in the appreciation of poetry and the technique of verse are more and more commonly forming a part of the English curriculum, especially in the freshman year, but the books available for use in such courses are as a rule either too large and too expensive or are, like the classic *Golden Treasury*, composed almost entirely of songs and lyrics. Teachers are agreed, I think, that for arousing a student's interest in poetry, the narrative, whether ballad or longer tale in verse, is particularly useful and that, although "pure poetry" is most often found in the lyric, to restrict the beginner's attention to the lyric is likely to give him a false notion of both the variety and the scope of poetic expression. From the course in appreciation, for example, epic and dramatic and reflective blank verse cannot be omitted. There are, moreover, a great many forms of verse which, although they are not essentially poetic in spirit, are delightful and sometimes important. In the eighteenth century, for instance, the lyric, except in Scotland, was of little account, but certain sophisticated forms, such as the poetic epistle, the prologue, the fable, the character-sketch, and the essay, were brought to perfection. These form a part of the poetic tradition and do not deserve to be wholly neglected. Similarly, at other periods, the artificial French or Provençal forms, such as the ballade, rondeau, villanelle, and triolet, have been the subjects of much experimentation. They have never reached the dignity of the sonnet, and yet, if only as patterns,

have their place in the study of verse in general. And finally, although the date at which a poem was written is of minor significance, it still has its interest; and a consideration of epochs or periods is sometimes of more than academic importance.

It was such considerations that guided me in the compilation of *The College Book of Verse*. The form of the book has been a matter of much thought. It presented itself to me as a problem which may be expressed as follows: To produce a volume, of small dimension and low price and containing as rich a selection of poems as possible, in which the great masters should receive a fair representation but which should be an anthology of poems rather than poets and should illustrate the variety of verse and verse-forms rather than the history of poetry. My plan, more in detail, contemplated the inclusion of some half-dozen narratives of considerable length, — such as *Tam o' Shanter*, the *Eve of Saint Agnes*, the *Hamadryad*, the *Morte d'Arthur*, and *Isaac and Archibald*, — illustrating severally the realistic, romantic, classic, epic, and idyllic styles; three complete tragic scenes from Marlowe and Shakespeare; a selection of lyric passages from the *Psalms*, *Job*, the *Song of Songs*, and *Ecclesiastes;* a generous representation of ballads and sonnets; and a richer choice of poems of both the earliest and the latest periods, — the Middle English and Tudor, on the one hand, and the twentieth century, on the other, — than is usually found in anthologies. I have not hesitated to use excerpts when these would enrich the book and were complete in themselves.

The selection of contemporary poems is always a difficult task and can never hope to be entirely satisfactory to either the compiler or the reader; and the

difficulty is by no means merely one of taste and judgment, because it is always complicated by questions of copyright. I have followed about the only plan possible in the circumstances, of using those poems that I liked, when I could get them, but always deferring to expert opinion. In the choice of contemporary poems many friends have helped me, often unconsciously, and I owe a special debt to Mr. Louis Untermeyer and Mr. Odell Shepard, who checked over my lists and made many valuable suggestions. For the earlier periods, Mr. Walter Hinchman, poetry editor of the *Forum*, generously performed a similar service. For the inception of the book and for countless helps and criticisms I am indebted to the English staff of Simmons College, and to many students in Harvard University, Boston University, and Simmons College.

It seemed best, for the convenience of teachers and students, to arrange the contents as far as possible according to date, but to keep poems by the same author together, even though by doing so I had to violate the strict chronological order. Many of the dates are, of course, only approximate. They are, in general, the dates of composition, but since these are often unknown or (by me) undiscoverable, they may sometimes represent merely a guess. The dates of the births and deaths of authors will be found in the general Index.

It seemed advisable in the Index to list authors, titles, and first lines under one alphabet, distinguishing them by different printing-types. A second index, — of Subjects, Types, Forms, and Technique, — will, it is hoped, prove of value in the classroom, particularly in the technical study of verse. The footnotes have been made as few as possible and in general do not explain words that can be found in a dictionary.

NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

Page 8 (footnote). *Seint Loy.* Professor Lowes has proved that Saint Loy was the "fashionable saint" of the time and that the Prioress, though she did swear, mildly, swore elegantly.

Page 9 (footnote). *gauded.* Professor Manly now rejects the explanation given in the text, because in Chaucer's time rosaries were still very short, consisting of only ten or twelve beads.

Pages 41 *ff.* In dating the poems of the late Tudor period, I have in general followed Norman Ault, *Elizabethan Lyrics*, 1925; of the next century, Professor Schelling's *Seventeenth Century Lyrics*, 1899.

Page 79. "Wraggle Taggle Gipsies." Walter de la Mare, in *Come Hither*, intimates that this song is of Somersetshire origin.

Page 126. Sylvester seems to have spelled his first name Josuah.

Page 127. "Phyllida Flouts Me." The version is that given by Ault.

Page 134. "Aspatia's Song." The version is that given by Ault. He says: "The poem is here correctly printed for the first time in nearly 300 years."

Page 254. "My Auld Breeks." This is placed too early in the text. I have not discovered the date, but it is no doubt after 1801.

Page 336. "The Sailor's Consolation." The ascription to Pitt is that of Tom Hood the younger, in his *Illustrated Readings*. Dibdin wrote a song under the same title, whence probably the persistent error in ascribing this one to him.

Page 355. "One Crowded Hour." The date should be 1791. The discovery of the authorship of this famous quatrain was made in 1920. The facts are given in the *Literary Digest* for September 11, of that year.

Page 454. "The Steam Threshing-Machine." The date is 1868.

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Note. This book, with a special introduction, "Some Notes on Poetry," is printed in a library edition for the general reader under the title, *The Riverside Book of Verse.*

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THE COLLEGE BOOK OF VERSE

MIDDLE ENGLISH AND EARLY TUDOR PERIOD — 1250–1580

CUCKOO SONG

c. 1250

Sumer is icumen in,
  Lhude sing cuccu!
Groweth sed, and bloweth med,
  And springeth the wude nu —
    Sing cuccu!

Awe bleteth after lomb,
  Lhouth after calve cu;
Bulloc sterteth, bucke verteth,
  Murie sing cucu!

Cuccu, cuccu, well singes thu, cuccu:
  Ne swike thu naver nu;
Sing cuccu, nu, sing cuccu,
  Sing cuccu, sing cuccu, nu!

Author unknown

lhude, loud. *awe*, ewe. *lhouth*, lows. *sterteth*, leaps.
verteth, browses in the forest(?). *swike*, cease.

ALISON

c. 1300

Bytwene Mersh and Averil,
  When spray beginneth to springe,

The lutel foul hath hire wyl
On hyre lud to synge.
Ich libbe in love longinge
For semlokest of alle thinge.
He may me blisse bringe;
Icham in hire baundoun.
An hendy hap ichabbe yhent,
Ichot, from hevene it is me-sent,
From alle wymmen mi love is lent
And lyht on Alysoun . . .

Author unknown

SPRINGTIME

c. 1300

Lenten ys come with Love to toune,
With blosmen and with briddes roune;
That al this blisse bryngeth.
Dayes-eyes in this dales;
Notes suete of nytegales;
Uch foul song singeth.
The threstercoc him threteth oo;
Away is huere wynter woo,
When woderoue springeth.
This foules singeth ferly fele,
And wlyteth on huere wynter wele,
That al the wode ryngeth . . .

Author unknown

on hyre lud, in her language.
semlokest, seemliest.
baundoun, thraldom.
an hendy hap ichabbe yhent, a pleasant fortune have I got.
ichot, I wot, believe.
Lenten, spring.
this (l.4), these (also in l.10).
threstercoc, throstlecock.
huere, their.
ferly fele, wondrous many.
wele, weal.
ick libbe, I live.
he, she.
lent, departed.
roune, whisper.
threteth, threatens.
woderoue, woodruff.
wlyteth, look (or whistle?).
icham, I am
lyht, alighted.
uch, each.
oo, ever.

UBI SUNT QUI ANTE NOS FUERUNT?

c. 1350

Were beth they that biforen us weren,
Houndes ladden and havekes beren,
And hadden feld and wode?
The rich levedies in here bour,
That wereden gold in here tressour,
With here brighte rode.

Eten and drounken, and maden hem glad;
Here lif was al with gamen y-lad,
Men kneleden hem biforen;
They beren hem wel swithe heye;
And in a twincling of an eye
Here soules weren forloren.

Were is that lawhing and that song,
That trayling and that proude gong,
That hevekes and tho houndes?
Al that joye is went away,
That wele is comen to weylawey
To manye harde stoundes.

Here paradis they nomen here,
And nou they lyen in helle y-fere;
The fyr hit brennes evere:
Long is ay, and long is o,
Long is wy, and long is wo;
Thennes ne cometh they nevere.

Author unknown

were beth, where are.
havekes beren, hawks bore.
tressour, head-dress.
gamen, pleasure.
forloren, lost.
stoundes, hours.
here, here.
levedies, ladies.
rode, complexion.
wel swithe heye, very high (haughtily).
trayling, wearing trains.
here, their.
y-fere, together.
ladden, led.
here, their.
hem, them.
gong, gait.
nomen, took.

A ROUNDEL

c. 1382

"*Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,*
That hast this wintres weders over-shake,
And driven awey the longe nightes blake!"

Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hy on-lofte,
Thus singen smale foules for thy sake:
"*Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,*
That hast this wintres weders over-shake."

Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte,
Sith each of hem recovered hath his make;
Ful blisful may they singen when they wake:
"*Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,*
That hast this wintres weders over-shake,
And driven awey the longe nightes blake!"

Geoffrey Chaucer (from *The Parlement of Foules*)

DAWN

c. 1386

The bisy larke, messager of day,
Salueth in hir song the morwe gray;
And fyry Phebus ryseth up so brighte,
That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,
And with his stremes dryeth in the greves
The silver dropes, hanging on the leves.

Geoffrey Chaucer (from *The Knight's Tale*)

A DREAM GARDEN

c. 1382

A garden saw I, ful of blosmy bowes,
Upon a river, in a grene mede,

weders, storms. *over-shake*, over-turned. *on-lofte*, above.
foules, birds. *han*, have. *sith*, since.
make, mate. *morwe*, morrow, morning.
greves, groves. *bowes*, boughs.

Ther as that swetnesse evermore y-now is,
With floures whyte, blewe, yelowe, and rede;
And colde welle-stremes, no-thing dede,
That swommen ful of smale fisshes lighte,
With finnes rede and scales silver-brighte.

On every bough the briddes herde I singe,
With voys of aungel in hir armonye;
Some besyed hem hir briddes forth to bringe;
The litel conyes to hir pley gunne hye;
And further al aboute I gan espye
The dredful roo, the buk, the hert and hinde,
Squerels, and bestes smale of gentil kinde.

Of instruments of strenges in acord
Herde I so pleye a ravisshing swetnesse,
That God, that maker is of al and lord,
Ne herde never better, as I gesse;
Therwith a wind, unnethe hit might be lesse,
Made in the leves grene a noise softe
Acordant to the foules songe on-lofte.

The air of that place so attempre was
That never was grevaunce of hoot ne cold;
Ther wex eek every holsom spyce and gras,
Ne no man may ther wexe seek ne old;
Yet was ther joye more a thousand fold
Then man can telle; ne never wolde it nighte,
But ay cleer day to any mannes sighte.

Geoffrey Chaucer (from *The Parlement of Foules*)

y-now, enough. *conyes*, rabbits. *gunne*, began.
dredful, timid. *unnethe*, hardly. *attempre*, temperate.
wex, grow. *wolde*, would. *nighte*, grow dark.

THAN LONGEN FOLK TO GOON ON PILGRIMAGES

c. 1386

Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open ye,
(So priketh hem Nature in hir corages);
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
(And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)
To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.

Geoffrey Chaucer (from *The Canterbury Tales*, Prologue)

TWO WOMEN

I. A WIFE OF BATH

c. 1386

A Good-wif was ther of biside Bathe,
But she was som-del deef and that was scathe.
Of clooth-makyng she hadde swich an haunt
She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.

soote, sweet. *swich*, such. *holt*, wood.
croppes, twigs. *fowles*, birds. *corages*, hearts.
straunge strondes, foreign shores.
ferne halwes, distant shrines. *couthe*, known.
scathe, harm, too bad. *haunt*, skill.

In al the parisshe wif ne was ther noon
That to the offrynge bifore hire sholde goon;
And if ther dide, certeyn so wrooth was she
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fyne weren of ground;
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound,
That on a Sonday weren upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed
Ful streite y-teyd, and shoes ful moyste and newe.
Boold was hir face and fair and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve;
Housbondes at chirche dore she hadde fyve,
Withouten oother compaignye in youthe,
But ther-of nedeth nat to speke as nowthe;
And thries hadde she been at Jerusalem;
She hadde passed many a straunge strem;
At Rome she hadde been and at Bologne,
In Galice at Seint Jame, and at Coloigne;
She coude muche of wandrynge by the weye:
Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.
Upon an amblere esily she sat,
Y-wympled wel, and on her heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,
And on hire feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felaweshipe wel coude she laughe and carpe;
Of remedies of love she knew per chaunce,
For she coude of that art the olde daunce.

coverchiefs, kerchiefs.
streite y-teyd, tightly fastened.
as nowthe, at present.
ground, texture.
moyste, soft.
coude, knew.
gat-tothed, goat-toothed, teeth set wide apart (a sign that one will travel)
y-wympled, with a wimple or cloth about her face.
foot-mantel, riding-skirt.
coude, knew.
the olde daunce, a slang phrase, "the old game."

II. A PRIORESS

c. 1386

Ther was also a Nonne, a Prioresse,
That of hir smylyng was full symple and coy;
Hire gretteste ooth was but by Seint Loy,
And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.
Ful weel she songe the service dyvyne,
Entuned in hir nose ful semely;
And Frenssh she spak ful faire and fetisly
After the scole of Stratford-atte-Bow,
For Frenssh of Paris was to hire unknowe.
At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle,
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
Ne wette hir fyngres in hir sauce depe;
Wel coude she carie a morsel and wel kepe,
That no drope ne fille upon hire breste.
In curteisie was set ful muchel hir leste.
Hire over-lippe wyped she so clene,
That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,
And sikerly she was of greet desport,
And ful plesaunt and amyable of port,
And peyned hire to countrefete cheere
Of court, and been estatlich of manere,
And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But, for to speken of hire conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous
She wolde wepe if that she saugh a mous
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.

coy, quiet. *Seint Loy*, *i.e.*, St. Eligius, who did not swear at all.
cleped, named. *fetisly*, skilfully.
Stratford-atte-Bow, a convent near London. *leste*, pleasure.
ferthyng, speck. *raughte*, reached. *sikerly*, certainly.
desport, good humor. *port*, bearing.
peyned hire, exerted herself. *cheere*, fashions.
digne, worthy. *saugh*, saw.

Of smale houndes hadde she, that she fedde
With rosted flessh, or milk and wastel-breed;
But sore wepte she, if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte,
And al was conscience and tendre herte.
Ful semyly hir wympul pynched was;
Hire nose tretys, hir eyen greye as glas,
Hir mouth ful smal and ther-to softe and reed
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
It was almoost a spanne brood I trowe,
For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
Ful fetys was hir cloke, as I was war;
Of smal coral aboute hire arm she bar
A peire of bedes gauded al with grene,
And ther-on heng a brooch of gold ful sheene,
On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after *Amor vincit omnia.*

Geoffrey Chaucer (from *The Canterbury Tales,* Prologue)

TWO MEN

I. A PARSON

A goodman was ther of religioun,
And was a Poure Persoun of a Town;
But riche he was of hooly thoght and werk;
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes Gospel trewely wolde preche,
His parisshens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benygne he was and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful pacient;
And swich he was y-preved ofte sithes.

wastel-breed, cake bread. *deed,* dead. *men,* any one.
yerde, stick. *semyly,* neatly. *wympul,* face cloth.
pynched, plaited. *tretys,* well-formed. *hardily,* certainly.
fetys, well-made. *peire,* set, string.
gauded, etc., *i.e.* every eleventh bead was a large green one.
sheene, beautiful. *y-preved,* proved. *sithes,* times.

Ful looth were hym to cursen for his tithes,
But rather wolde he yeven out of doubte,
Unto his poure parisshens aboute,
Of his offryng and eek of his substaunce:
He koude in litel thyng have suffisaunce:
Wyd was his parisshe and houses fer asonder.
But he ne lafte nat for reyn ne thonder,
In siknesse nor in meschief to visite
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lite,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his sheepe he yaf
That firste he wroghte and afterward he taughte.
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte,
And this figure he added eek therto,
That if gold ruste what shal iren doo?
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
And shame it is, if a prest take keepe,
A [filthy] shepherde and a clene sheepe.
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive
By his clennesse how that his sheepe sholde lyve.
He sette nat his benefice to hyre
And leet his sheepe encombred in the myre,
And ran to Londoun, unto Seint Poules,
To seken hym a chaunterie for soules;
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde,
But dwelte at hoom and kepte wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie, —
He was a shepherde, and noght a mercenarie
And though he hooly were and vertuous,
He was to synful man nat dispitous,
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
But in his techyng descreet and benynge,

yeven, give. *eke*, also. *yaf*, gave. *tho*, those.
lewed, unlearned. *withholde*, maintained.
dispitous, pitiless. *daungerous*, overbearing. *digne*, haughty.

To drawen folk to hevene by fairnesse,
By good ensample, this was his bisynesse;
But it were any persone obstinat,
What so he were, of heigh or lough estat,
Hym wolde he snybben sharply for the nonys.
A bettre preest I trowe that nowher noon ys;
He waited after no pompe and reverence,
Ne marked him a spiced conscience,
But Cristes loore, and his Apostles twelve,
He taughte, but first he folwed it hymselve.

II. A CLERK OF OXFORD

A Clerk ther was of Oxenford also
That unto logyk hadde long y-go.
As leene was his hors as is a rake.
And he was nat right fat, I undertake,
But looked holwe, and ther-to sobrely;
Ful thredbare was his overeste courtepy;
For he hadde geten hym yet no benefice,
Ne was so worldly for to have office;
For hym was levere have at his beddes heed
Twenty bookes clad in blak or reed
Of Aristotle and his philosophie,
Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrie:
But al be that he was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;
But al that he myghte of his freendes hente
On bookes and his lernynge he it spente,
And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that yaf hym wher-with to scoleye.
Of studie took he moost cure and moost heed,
Noght o word spak he moore than was neede,

snybben, snub, rebuke.
overeste courtepy, short overcoat.
sautrie, harp.
cure, care.
al be, although.
o, one.
nonys, occasion.
fithele, fiddle.
scoleye, study.

And that was seyd in forme and reverence,
And short and quyk and ful of hy sentence.
Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche.

Geoffrey Chaucer (from *The Canterbury Tales*, Prologue)

"THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE"

Balade de Bon Conseyl

c. 1390 (?)

Flee fro the prees, and dwelle with sothfastnesse,
Suffyce unto thy good, though hit be small;
For hord hath hate, and climbing tikelnesse,
Prees hath envye, and wele blent overal;
Savour no more than thee bihove shal;
Werk wel thy-self, that other folk canst rede;
And truthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

Tempest thee noght al croked to redresse,
In trust of hir that turneth as a bal:
Gret reste stant in litel besinesse;
And eek be war to sporne ageyn an al;
Stryve noght, as doth the crokke with the wal.
Daunte thy-self, that dauntest others dede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnesse,
The wrastling for this worlde axeth a fal.
Her nis non hoom, her nis but wildernesse:
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of thy stal!

sownynge in, tending to. *prees*, crowd. *sothfastnesse*, truth.
suffyce, be contented, be frugal. *hord*, treasure.
tikelnesse, insecurity.
wele, etc., prosperity blinds (folk) everywhere. *savour*, desire.
rede, advise. *tempest*, agitate. *hir*, her, *i.e.*, Fortune.
reste, repose. *sporne*, kick (cf. Acts 9 : 5). *al*, awl.
crokke, crock, pot. *daunte*, subdue. *dede*, deeds.
buxumnesse, cheerful obedience.

Hold the hye wey, and lat thy gost thee lede:
And trouthe shall delivere, hit is no drede.

Envoy

Therefore, thou vache, leve thyn old wrecchednesse
Unto the worlde; leve now to be thral:
Crye Him mercy, that of His hy goodnesse
Made thee of noght, and in especial
Draw unto Him, and pray in general
For thee, and eek for other, hevenlich mede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

Geoffrey Chaucer

THE NUTBROWNE MAIDE

c. 1500

1. "Be it right or wrong, these men among on women do complaine,
Affermyng this, how that it is a labour spent in vaine
To love them wele, for never a dele they love a man agayne;
For lete a man do what he can ther favour to attayne,
Yet yf a newe to them pursue, ther furst trew lover than
Laboureth for nought, and from her thought he is a bannisshed man."

2. "I say not nay but that all day it is both writ and sayde
That woman's fayth is, as who saythe, all utterly decayed;

gost, spirit.
vache, cow. — It has been maintained that the word is Vache, — *i.e.*, Sir Philip Vache, to whom the ballade is supposed to be addressed.
crye . . . mercy, thank. *mede*, reward. *among*, continually.

But nevertheless right good witnès in this case might be layde
That they love trewe and contynew, — recorde the Nutbrowne Maide,
Whiche from her love, whan, her to prove, he cam to make his mone,
Wolde not departe, for in her herte she lovyd but hym allone."

3. "Than betwene us lete us discusse what was all the manèr
Betwene them too, we wyl also telle all the peyne infere
That she was in. Now I begynne, soo that ye me answere.
Wherfore alle ye that present be, I pray you geve an eare.
I am a knyght, I cum be nyght, as secret as I can,
Sayng, 'Alas! thus stondyth the case: I am a bannisshed man.'"

4. "And I your wylle for to fulfylle, in this wyl not refuse,
Trusting to shewe in wordis fewe that men have an ille use,
To ther owne shame wymen to blame, and causeles them accuse.
Therfore to you I answere now, all wymen to excuse:
'Myn owne hert dere, with you what chiere? I prey you telle anoon;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you allon.'"

infere, together.

5. "It stondeth so, a dede is do wherfore moche harme shal growe.
My desteny is for to dey a shamful dethe, I trowe,
Or ellis to flee; the ton must bee, none other wey I knowe
But to withdrawe as an outlaw and take me to my bowe.
Wherfore adew, my owne hert trewe, none other red I can;
For I muste to the grene wode goo, alone, a bannysshed man."

6. "O Lord, what is this worldis blisse, that chaungeth as the mone?
My somers day in lusty May is derked before the none.
I here you saye 'farwel;' nay, nay, we departe not soo sone.
Why say ye so? wheder wyl ye goo? alas! what have ye done?
Alle my welfare to sorrow and care shulde chaunge if ye were gon;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

7. "I can beleve it shal you greve, and somewhat you distrayne;
But aftyrwarde your paynes harde within a day or tweyne
Shal sone aslake, and ye shal take confort to you agayne.
Why shuld ye nought? for to take thought, your labur were in veyne.

ton, one. *red I can*, counsel I know. *distrayne*, distress.

And thus I do, and pray you, loo! as hertely as I can;
For I muste too the grene wode goo, alone, a bannysshed man."

8. "Now syth that ye have shewed to me the secret of your mynde,
I shalbe playne to you agayne, lyke as ye shal me fynde;
Syth it is so that ye wyll goo, I wol not leve behynde;
Shal ne'er be sayd the Nutbrowne Mayd was to her love unkind.
Make you redy, for soo am I, all though it were anoon;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

9. "Yet I you rede to take good hede, what men wyl thinke and sey;
Of yonge and olde it shalbë tolde that ye be gone away,
Your wanton wylle for to fulfylle, in grene wood you to play,
And that ye myght from your delyte noo lenger make delay.
Rather than ye shuld thus for me be called an ylle woman,
Yet wolde I to the grenewodde goo, alone, a bannysshed man."

10. "Though it be songe of olde and yonge that I shuld be to blame,
Theirs be the charge that speke so large in hurting of my name;

leve, remain. *anoon*, anon, immediately.

For I wyl prove that feythful love it is devoyd of shame,
In your distresse and hevynesse to parte wyth you the same;
And sure all thoo that doo not so, trewe lovers ar they noon;
But in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

11. "I councel yow, remembre how it is noo maydens lawe
Nothing to dought, but to renne out to wod with an outlawe;
For ye must there in your hands bere a bowe redy to drawe,
And as a theef thus must ye lyve ever in drede and awe,
By whiche to yow gret harme myght grow; yet had I lever than
That I had too the grenewod goo, alone, a banysshyd man."

12. "I thinke not nay, but as ye saye, it is noo maydens lore;
But love may make me for your sake, as ye have said before,
To cum on fote, to hunte and shote to get us mete and store;
For soo that I your company may have, I aske noo more;
From whiche to parte, it makith myn herte as colde as ony ston;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

thoo, those.

13. "For an outlawe this is the lawe, that men hym take and binde,
Wythout pytee hanged to bee, and waver wyth the wynde.
Yf I had neede, as God forbede, what rescous coude ye finde?
For sothe I trowe, you and your bowe shul drawe for fere behynde;
And noo merveyle, for lytel avayle were in your councel than;
Wherfore I too the woode wyl goo, alone, a bannysshd man."

14. "Ful wel knowe ye that wymen bee ful febyl for to fyght;
Noo womanhed is it indeede to bee bolde as a knight;
Yet in suche fere yf that ye were, amonge enemys day and nyght,
I wolde wythstonde, with bowe in hande, to greve them as I myght,
And you to save, as wymen have from deth men many one;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

15. "Yet take good hede, for ever I drede that ye coude not sustein
The thorney wayes, the depe valeis, the snowe, the frost, the reyn,
The colde, the hete; for, drye or wete, we must lodge on the playn,
And, us above, noon other rove but a brake, bussh, or twayne;

rescous, rescue. *rove*, roof.

Whiche sone shulde greve you, I beleve, and ye wolde gladly than
That I had too the grenewode goo, alone, a banysshed man."

16. "Syth I have here ben partynere with you of joy and blysse,
I muste alsò parte of your woo endure, as reason is;
Yet I am sure of oo plesure, and shortly it is this,
That where ye bee, me semeth, perdë, I coude not fare amysse.
Without more speche, I you beseche that we were soon agone;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

17. "Yef ye goo thedyr, ye must consider, whan ye have lust to dyne,
Ther shal no mete be fore to gete, nor drinke, bere, ale, ne wine,
Ne shetis clene to lye betwene, made of thred and twyne,
Noon other house but levys and bowes, to kever your hed and myn.
Loo! myn herte swete, this ylle dyèt shuld make you pale and wan;
Wherfore I to the wood wyl goo, alone, a banysshid man."

18. "Amonge the wylde dere such an archier as men say that ye bee
Ne may not fayle of good vitayle, where is so grete plentë;

oo, one.

And watir cleere of the ryvere shalbë ful swete to me,
Wyth whiche in hele I shal right wele endure, as ye shal see;
And, er we goo, a bed or twoo I can provide anoon;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

19. "Loo! yet before ye must doo more, yf ye wyl goo with me, —
As cutte your here up by your ere, your kirtel by the knee,
Wyth bowe in hande, for to withstonde your enmys, yf nede be,
And this same nyght before daylyght to woodward wyl I flee;
And if ye wyl all this fulfylle, doo it shortely as ye can:
Ellis wil I to the grenewode goo, alone, a banysshyd man."

20. "I shal, as now, do more for you than longeth to womanhede,
To short my here, a bowe to bere to shote in time of nede.
O my swete moder, before all other, for you have I most drede;
But now adiew! I must ensue, wher fortune doth me leede:
All this make ye; now lete us flee, the day cummeth fast upon;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

hele, health.

21. "Nay, nay, not soo, ye shal not goo! and I shal tell you why:
Your appetyte is to be lyght of love, I wele aspie;
For right as ye have sayd to me, in lykewise hardely
Ye wolde answere, whosoever it were, in way of company.
It is sayd of olde, 'sone hot, sone colde,' and so is a woman;
Wherfore I too the woode wyl goo, alone, a banysshid man."

22. "Yef ye take hede, yet is noo nede, suche wordis to say bee me,
For oft ye preyd, and long assayed, or I you lovid, perdee!
And though that I of auncestry a barons doughter bee,
Yet have you proved how I you loved, a squyer of lowe degree,
And ever shal, what so befalle, to dey therfore anoon;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

23. "A barons childe to be begyled, it were a cursséd dede,
To be felaw with an outlawe, almyghty God forbede!
Yet bettyr were the power squyèr alone to forest yede,
Than ye shal say, another day, that be my wyked dede

bee, by, *i.e.*, of. *or*, before. *dey*, die.
power, poor. *yede*, should go.

Ye were betrayed; wherfore, good maide, the best red that I can,
Is that I too the grenewode goo, alone, a banysshed man."

24. "Whatsoever befalle, I never shal of this thing you upbraid;
But yf ye goo and leve me so, than have ye me betraied.
Remembre you wele how that ye dele, for yf ye, as ye sayde,
Be so unkynde to leve behynde your love, the Notbrowne Maide,
Trust me truly that I shal dey sone after ye be gone;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

25. "Yef that ye went, ye shulde repent, for in the forest now
I have purveid me of a maide, whom I love more than you, —
Another fayrer than ever ye were, I dare it wele avowe;
And of you both, eche shuld be wrothe with other, as I trowe.
It were myn ease to lyve in pease; so wyl I yf I can;
Wherfor I to the wode wyl goo, alone, a banysshid man."

26. "Though in the wood I undirstode ye had a paramour,
All this may nought remeve my thought, but that I wyl be your;

red, advice

And she shal fynde me softe and kynde, and curteis every our,
Glad to fulfylle all that she wyl commaunde me, to my power;
For had ye, loo! an hondred moo, yet wolde I be that one;
For in my mynde of all mankynde I love but you alone."

27. "Myn owne dere love, I see the prove that ye be kynde and trew;
Of mayde and wyfe, in all my lyf, the best that ever I knewe!
Be mery and glad, be no more sad, the case is chaungèd newe;
For it were ruthe that for your trouth you shuld have cause to rewe.
Be not dismayed, whatsoever I sayd, to you whan I began,
I wyl not too the grenewode goo, I am noo banysshyd man."

28. "Theis tidingis be more glad to me than to be made a quene,
Yf I were sure they shuld endure; but it is often seen,
When men wyl breke promyse, they speke the wordis on the splene.
Ye shape some wyle, me to begyle, and stele fro me, I wene.
Then were the case wurs than it was, and I more woo-begone;
For in my mynde of al mankynde I love but you alone."

on the splene, in haste.

29. "Ye shal not nede further to drede, I wyl not disparage
You, God defende, sith you descende of so grete a lynage.
Now understonde, to Westmerlande, whiche is my herytage,
I wyle you bringe, and wyth a rynge, be wey of maryage,
I wyl you take, and lady make, as shortly as I can;
Thus have ye wone an erlës son, and not a bannysshyd man."

30. Here may ye see that wymen be in love meke, kinde, and stable,
Late never man repreve them than, or calle them variable,
But rather prey God that we may to them be comfortable, —
Whiche somtyme provyth suche as he loveth, yf they be charitable.
For sith men wolde that wymen sholde be meke to them echone,
Moche more ought they to God obey, and serve but hym alone.

Author unknown

CHRISTMAS-TIDE

c. 1500

Make we mery, both more and lasse,
For now ys the tyme of Crystymas!

Let no man cum into this hall,
Grome, page, nor yet marshal,
But that sum sport he bring withall,
For now ys the tyme of Crystymas.
Make we mery, etc.

Yffe that he say he can not syng,
Sum oder sport then lett hym bryng,
That yt may please at thys festyng,
For now ys the tyme of Crystymas.
Make we mery, etc.

Yffe he say he can nowght do,
Then, for my love, aske hym no mo,
But to the stokke then lett hym go,
For now ys the tyme of Crystymas,
Make we mery, etc.

Author unknown

CAROL

15th cent.

I sing a maiden
That is makeles;
King of all kings
To her son she ches.

He came al so still
There his mother was,
As dew in April
That falleth on the grass.

He came al so still
To his mother's bour,
As dew in April
That falleth on the flour.

He came al so still
There his mother lay,
As dew in April
That falleth on the spray.

stokke, stocks. *makeles*, matchless. *ches*, chose.

Mother and maiden
Was never none but she;
Well may such a lady
Goddes mother be.

Author unknown

WHITSUNTIDE

MS. c. 1450 (?)

In somer, when the shawes be sheyne,
And leves be large and long,
Hit is full mery in feyre foreste
To here the foulys song.

To se the dere draw to the dale,
And leve the hilles hee,
And shadow hem in the leves grene,
Under the grene-wode tre.

Hit befel on Whitsuntide,
Erly in a May mornyng,
The son up feyre can shyne,
And the briddis mery can syng.

"This is a mery mornyng," seid Litull John,
"Be hym that dyed on tre;
A more mery man then I am one
Lyves not in Cristiante.

"Pluk up thi hert, my dere mayster,"
Litull John can sey,
"And thynk hit is a full fayre tyme
In a mornyng of May."

From *Robin Hood and the Monk*, *Author unknown*

shawes, groves, thickets. *sheyne*, beautiful.
foulys, birds'. *hee*, high. *can shyne*, shone.

RORATE CELI DESUPER

bef. 1520

Rorate celi desuper!
Heavens distil your balmy shouris,
For now is risen the bricht day ster,
Fro the rose Mary, flour of flouris;
The clear Son, whom no clud devouris,
Surmounting Phoebus in the east,
Is comen of his heavenly touris;
Et nobis Puer natus est.

Archangellis, angellis, and dompnationis,
Tronis, potestatis, and martyris seir,
And all ye heavenly operationis,
Ster, planet, firmament, and sphere,
Fire, erd, air, and water clear,
To him gife loving, most and least,
That come in-to so meek manner;
Et nobis Puer natus est.

Celestial fowlis in the air,
Sing with your notis upon hicht;
In firthis and in forestis fair
Be mirthful now, at all your micht,
For passit is your dully nicht;
Aurora has the cloudis pierc'd,
The sun is risen with glaidsome licht,
Et nobis Puer natus est.

Now spring up flouris fra the root,
Revert you upward naturally,
In honor of the blissit fruit

of, from. *potestatis*, powers. *seir*, various.
erd, earth. *in-to*, in.

That raise up fro the rose Mary;
Lay out your leavès lustily,
Fro dede tak life now at the lest
In worship of that Prince worthy,
Qui nobis Puer natus est.

Sing, heaven imperial, most of hicht,
Regions of air mak harmony;
All fish in flood and fowl of flicht,
Be mirthful and mak melody:
All GLORIA IN EXCELSIS cry,
Heaven, erd, sea, man, bird, and beast,
He that is crownit abune the sky
Pro nobis Puer natus est.

William Dunbar

MATER DULCISSIMA

c. 1500

"Quid petis, o fily?"
"Mater dulcissima, ba-ba!"
"Quid petis, o fili?"
"Michi plausus oscula da-da!"

So laughyng in lap layde,
So pretyly, so pertly,
So passyngly well a-payd,
Ful softly and full soberly
Unto her swet son she said:
"Quid petys," etc.

The moder full manerly and mekly as a mayd,
Lokyng on her lytill son so laugyhng in lap layd,

dede, dead.
most of hicht, most high.
lest, last.
abune, above.

So pretyly, so partly, so passingly well apayd,
So passyngly wel apayd,
Full softly and full soberly
Unto her son she saide,
Unto her son saide:
"Quid petis," etc.

I mene this by Mary, our Makers moder of myght,
Full lovely lookyng on our Lord, the lanterne of lyght,
Thus saying to our Savior; this saw I in my syght.

Author unknown

HIS EPITAPH

c. 1506

O mortall folke, you may beholde and se
How I lye here, sometime a myghty knyght!
The end of joye and all prosperitè
Is deth at last, thorough his course and myght!
After the day there cometh the derkè night;
For though the day be never so longe,
At last the belles ringeth to even-songe!

Stephen Hawes (from *The Pastime of Pleasure*)

GOD'S BLESSINGS

bef. 1524

Pleasure it is
To hear, iwis,
The birdes sing.
The deer in the dale,
The sheep in the vale,
The corn springing;

iwis, truly, in sooth.

God's purveyance
For sustenance
It is for man.
Then we always
To Him give praise.
And thank Him than.
And thank Him than.

William Cornish

THE HUNT IS UP!

c. 1530

The Hunt is up! the Hunt is up!
And it is well-nigh day;
And Harry our King is gone hunting,
To bring his deer to bay.

The East is bright with morning light;
And darkness, it is fled:
And the merry horn wakes up the Morn
To leave his idle bed.

Behold the skies, with golden dyes,
Are glowing all around!
The grass is green, so are the treen,
All laughing at the sound.

The horses snort to be at the sport,
The dogs are running free,
The woods rejoice at the merry noise
Of *Hey tantara tee ree!*

The sun is glad to see us clad
All in our lusty green,
And smiles in the sky, as he riseth high,
To see, and to be seen.

Awake, all men! I say again.
Be merry as you may!
For Harry our King is gone hunting,
To bring his deer to bay.

William Gray (?)

THE OLD CLOAK

16th cent.

He. This winter's weather it waxeth cold,
And frost it freezeth on every hill,
And Boreas blows his blast so bold
That all our cattle are like to spill.
Bell, my wife, she loves no strife;
She said unto me quietlye,
Rise up, and save cow Crumbock's life!
Man, put thine old cloak about thee!

O Bell my wife, why dost thou flyte?
Thou kens my cloak is very thin:
It is so bare and over worn,
A crickè thereon cannot renn.
Then I'll no longer borrow nor lend;
For once I'll new apparell'd be;
To-morrow I'll to town and spend;
For I'll have a new cloak about me.

She. Cow Crumbock is a very good cow:
She has been always true to the pail;
She has helped us to butter and cheese, I trow,
And other things she will not fail.
I would be loth to see her pine.
Good husband, counsel take of me:
It is not for us to go so fine —
Man, take thine old cloak about thee!

spill, be destroyed. *flyte*, scold. *crickè*, cricket.

He. My cloak it was a very good cloak,
  It hath been always true to the wear;
But now it is not worth a groat:
  I have had it four and forty year.
Sometime it was of cloth in grain:
  'Tis now but a sigh clout, as you may see:
It will neither hold out wind nor rain;
  And I'll have a new cloak about me.

She. It is four and forty years ago
  Sine the one of us the other did ken;
And we have had, betwixt us two,
  Of children either nine or ten:
We have brought them up to women and men:
  In the fear of God I trow they be.
And why wilt thou thyself misken?
  Man, take thine old cloak about thee!

He. O Bell my wife, why dost thou flyte?
  Now is now, and then was then:
Seek now all the world throughout,
  Thou kens not clowns from gentlemen:
They are clad in black, green, yellow, and blue,
  So far above their own degree.
Once in my life I'll take a view;
  For I'll have a new cloak about me.

She. King Stephen was a worthy peer;
  His breeches cost him but a crown;
He held them sixpence all too dear,
  Therefore he call'd the tailor "lown."
He was a king and wore the crown,
  And thou'se but of a low degree:
It's pride that puts this country down:
  Man, take thy old cloak about thee!

grain, scarlet. *sigh clout*, rag for straining. *lown*, loon.

He. Bell, my wife, she loves not strife,
Yet she will lead me, if she can;
And to maintain an easy life
I oft must yield, though I'm good-man.
It's not for a man with a woman to threap,
Unless he first give o'er the plea:
As we began, so will we keep,
And I'll take my old cloak about me.

Author unknown

BY–LOW

16th cent. (?).

Balow, my babe, lie still and sleep!
It grieves me sore to see thee weep.
Wouldst thou be quiet I'se be glad,
Thy mourning makes my sorrow sad:
Balow, my boy, thy mother's joy,
Thy father breeds me great annoy —
Balow, la-low!

When he began to court my love,
And with his sugred words me move,
His faynings false and flattering cheer
To me that time did not appear:
But now I see most cruellye
He cares ne for my babe nor me —
Balow, la-low!

Lie still, my darling, sleep awhile,
And when thou wak'st thou'le sweetly smile:
But smile not as thy father did,
To cozen maids: nay, God forbid!

threap, argue. *cozen*, deceive.

But yet I fear thou wilt go near
Thy father's heart and face to bear —
Balow, la-low!

I cannot choose but ever will
Be loving to thy father still;
Where'er he go, where'er he ride,
My love with him doth still abide;
In weal or woe, where'er he go,
My heart shall ne'er depart him fro —
Balow, la-low!

But do not, do not, pretty mine,
To faynings false thy heart incline!
Be loyal to thy lover true,
And never change her for a new:
If good or fair, of her have care
For women's banning's wondrous sare —
Balow, la-low!

Bairn, by thy face, I will beware;
Like Sirens' words, I'll come not near;
My babe and I together will live;
He'll comfort me when cares do grieve.
My babe and I right soft will lie,
And ne'er respect man's crueltye —
Balow, la-low!

Farewell, farewell, the falsest youth
That ever kist a woman's mouth!
I wish all maids be warn'd by me
Never to trust man's curtesye;
For if we do but chance to bow,
They'll use us then they care not how —
Balow, la-low!

Author unknown

banning, curse.

A LYKE-WAKE DIRGE

15th cent.

This ae night, this ae night,
Every night and alle,
Fire, and sleet, and candle-light,
And Christ receive thy saule.

When thou from hence away art past,
To Whinny-muir thou comest at last.

If ever thou gavest hosen and shoon,
Sit thee down and put them on;

If hosen and shoon thou gavest nane,
The whinnes shall prick thee to the bare bane.

From Whinny-muir when thou mayst pass,
To Brigg o' Dread thou comest at last;

From Brigg o' Dread when thou mayst pass,
To Purgatory Fire thou comest at last.

If ever thou gavest meat or drink,
The fire shall never make thee shrink;

If meat or drink thou gavest nane,
The fire will burn thee to the bare bane.

This ae night, this ae night,
Every night and alle,
Fire, and sleet, and candle-light,
And Christ receive thy saule.

Author unknown

lyke-wake, watch or vigil over a dead body.
sleet, probably a corruption of *salt*.
Whinny-muir, moor covered with whin or gorse — a prickly plant.

THE FALCON HATH BORNE MY MATE AWAY

15th cent

Lully, lulley, lulley, lulley!
The fawcon hath born my make away!

He bare hym up, he bare hym down,
He bare hym into an orchard brown.
Lully, lulley, etc.

Yn that orchard there was an halle
That was hangid with purpill and pall.

And in that hall there was a bede,
Hit was hangid with gold so rede.

And yn that bed there lythe a knyght,
His wowndis bledyng day and nyght.

By that bedis side kneleth a may,
And she wepeth night and day.

And by that beddis side there stondith a ston,
Corpus Christi wretyn theron.

Lully, lulley, lulley, lulley!
The fawcon hath born my make away!

Author unknown

THE MEANS TO ATTAIN HAPPY LIFE

Martial, *Epigrams*, X, 47

c. 1547

Martial, the things that do attain
The happy life, be these, I find:

make, mate. *may*, maiden.

The riches left, not got with pain;
The fruitful ground, the quiet mind:

The equal friend, no grudge, no strife;
No charge of rule, nor governance;
Without disease the healthful life;
The household of continuance:

The mean diet, no delicate fare;
True wisdom join'd with simpleness;
The night discharged of all care,
Where wine the wit may not oppress.

The faithful wife, without debate;
Such sleeps as may beguile the night:
Contented with thine own estate,
Ne wish for death, ne fear his might.

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (in Tottle's *Miscellany*)

THE HEAVENLY CITY

cf. *Revelation*, chaps. 21–22.

Bef. 1550

Hierusalem, my happy home,
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end?
Thy joys when shall I see?

O happy harbor of the saints!
O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow may be found,
No grief, no care, no toil . . .

There lust and lucre cannot dwell;
There envy bears no sway;

There is no hunger, heat, nor cold,
But pleasure every way.

Thy walls are made of precious stones,
Thy bulwarks diamonds square;
Thy gates are of right orient pearl,
Exceeding rich and rare.

Thy turrets and thy pinnacles
With carbuncles do shine;
Thy very streets are paved with gold,
Surpassing clear and fine.

Ah, my sweet home, Hierusalem,
Would God I were in thee!
Would God my woes were at an end,
Thy joys that I might see!

Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
Continually are green;
There are such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen.

Quite through the streets, with silver sound,
The flood of Life doth flow;
Upon whose banks on every side
The wood of Life doth grow.

There trees for evermore bear fruit,
And evermore do spring;
There evermore the angels sit,
And evermore do sing.

Our Lady sings *Magnificat*
With tones surpassing sweet;

And all the virgins bear their part,
Sitting about her feet.

Hierusalem, my happy home,
Would God I were in thee!
Would God my woes were at an end,
Thy joys that I might see!

From *Song of Mary the Mother of Christ, Author unknown*

AS YE CAME FROM THE HOLY LAND

Bef. 1550

As ye came from the holy land
Of Walsinghame,
Met you not with my true love
By the way as ye came?

"How should I know your true love,
That have met many a one
As I came from the holy land,
That have come, that have gone?"

She is neither white nor brown,
But as the heavens fair;
There is none hath her form divine
In the earth or the air.

"Such a one did I meet, good sir,
Such an angelic face,
Who like a nymph, like a queen, did appear
In her gait, in her grace."

She hath left me here alone
All alone, as unknown,

Walsinghame, a shrine in Norfolkshire.

Who sometime did me lead with herself
And me loved as her own.

"What's the cause that she leaves you alone
And a new way doth take,
That sometime did love you as her own,
And her joy did you make?"

I have loved her all my youth,
But now am old, as you see:
Love likes not the falling fruit,
Nor the withered tree.

Know that Love is a careless child,
And forgets promise past:
He is blind, he is deaf when he list,
And in faith never fast.

His desire is a dureless content,
And a trustless joy;
He is won with a world of despair,
And is lost with a toy.

Of womenkind such indeed is the love,
Or the word love abusèd,
Under which many childish desires
And conceits are excusèd.

But true love is a durable fire,
In the mind ever burning,
Never sick, never dead, never cold,
From itself never turning.

Sir Walter Raleigh (?)

SLEEP

1563

The body's rest, the quiet of the heart,
The travail's ease, the still night's fere was he,
And of our life in earth the better part;
Reaver of sight, and yet in whom we see
Things oft that tide, and oft that never be.
Without respect, esteeming equally
King Crœsus' pomp, and Irus' poverty.

Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst
(from *A Mirror for Magistrates*)

THERE IS A LADY SWEET AND KIND

c. 1580

There is a lady sweet and kind,
Was never face so pleased my mind;
I did but see her passing by,
And yet I love her till I die.

Her gesture, motion, and her smiles,
Her wit, her voice, my heart beguiles,
Beguiles my heart, I know not why,
And yet I love her till I die. . . .

Cupid is winged and doth range,
Her country so my love doth change:
But change she earth, or change she sky,
Yet will I love her till I die.

Thomas Ford's Music of Sundry Kinds, 1607

fere, companion. *reaver,* robber. *tide,* happen.

LOVE NOT ME FOR COMELY GRACE

c. 1580

Love not me for comely grace,
For my pleasing eye or face,
Nor for any outward part:
No, not for a constant heart,
For these may fail or turn to ill:
  So thou and I shall sever.
Keep therefore a true woman's eye,
And love me still, but know not why;
So hast thou the same reason still
  To doat upon me ever.

John Wilbye's Second Set of Madrigals, 1609

POPULAR SONGS AND BALLADS OF UNCERTAIN DATE

SAINT STEPHEN AND HEROD

MS. c. 1450

1. Seynt Stevene was a clerk in Kyng Herowdes halle,
   And servyd him of bred and cloth, as every kyng befalle.

2. Stevyn out of kechone cam, wyth boris hed on honde;
   He saw a sterre was fayr and bryght over Bedlem stonde.

3. He kyst adoun the boris hed and went in to the halle:
   "I forsak the, Kyng Herowdes, and thi werkes alle.

4. "I forsak the, Kyng Herowdes, and thi werkes alle;
   Ther is a child in Bedlem born is better than we alle."

5. "What eylyt the, Stevene? What is the befalle?
   Lakkyt the eyther mete or drynk in Kyng Herowdes halle?"

6. "Lakit me neyther mete or drynk in Kyng Herowdes halle;
   Ther is a chyld in Bedlem born is better than we alle."

befalle, befits.

7. "What eylyt the, Stevyn? Art thu wod, or thu
gynnyst to brede?
Lakkyt the eyther gold or fe, or ony rich wede?"

8. "Lakkyt me neyther gold nor fe, ne non rich wede;
Ther is child in Bedlem born sal helpyn us at our
nede."

9. "That is al so soth, Stevyn, al so soth, iwys,
As this capoun crowe sal that lyth here in myn
dysh."

10. That word was not so sone seyd, that word in that
halle,
The capoun crew *Christis natus est!* among the
lordes alle.

11. "Rysyt up, myn turmentowres, be to and al be on,
And ledyt Stevyn out of this toun, and stonyt
hym wyth ston!"

12. Tokyn he Stevene, and stonyd him in the way,
And therefore is his evyn on Crystes owyn day.

Wright's Songs and Carols, 1856

KINMONT WILLIE

The incidents took place in 1596

1. O have ye na heard of the fause Sakelde?
O have ye na heard o the keen Lord Scroop?
How they hae taen bauld Kinmont Willie,
On Hairibee to hang him up?

eylyt, aileth. *wod*, mad.
thu gynnyst to brede, beginnest thou to entertain strange fancies.
wede, clothes.
be to and al be on, by two and all by one, *i.e.*, by ones and twos.

2. Had Willie had but twenty men,
But twenty men as stout as he,
Fause Sakelde had never the Kinmont taen,
Wi eight score in his companie.

3. They band his legs beneath the steed,
They tied his hands behind his back;
They guarded him, fivesome on each side,
And they brought him ower the Liddel-rack.

4. They led him through the Liddel-rack,
And also thro the Carlisle sands;
They brought him to Carlisle castell,
To be at my Lord Scroope's commands.

5. "My hands are tied, but my tongue is free,
And whae will dare this deed avow?
Or answer by the Border-law?
Or answer to the bauld Buccleuch?"

6. "Now haud thy tongue, thou rank reiver!
There's never a Scot shall set ye free;
Before ye cross my castle-yate,
I trow ye shall take farewell o me."

7. "Fear na ye that, my lord," quo Willie;
"By the faith o my body, Lord Scroop," he said,
"I never yet lodged in a hostelrie,
But I paid my lawing before I gaed."

8. Now word is gane to the bauld Keeper,
In Branksome Ha where that he lay,
That Lord Scroope has taen the Kinmont Willie,
Between the hours of night and day.

reiver, robber. *lawing*, bill, reckoning.

9. He has taen the table wi his hand,
He garrd the red wine spring on hie;
"Now Christ's curse on my head," he said,
"But avenged of Lord Scroope I'll be!

10. "O is my basnet a widow's curch,
Or my lance a wand of the willow-tree,
Or my arm a ladye's lilye hand,
That an English lord should lightly me?

11. "And have they taen him, Kinmont Willie,
Against the truce of the Border tide,
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
Is keeper here on the Scottish side?

12. "And have they een taen him, Kinmont Willie,
Withouten either dread or fear,
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
Can back a steed, or shake a spear?

13. "O were there war between the lands,
As well I wot that there is none,
I would slight Carlisle castell high,
Tho it were builded of marble stone.

14. "I would set that castell on a low,
And sloken it with English blood;
There's nevir a man in Cumberland
Should ken where Carlisle castell stood.

15. "But since nae war's between the lands,
And there is peace, and peace should be,
I'll neither harm English lad or lass,
And yet the Kinmont freed shall be!"

basnet, helmet. *curch*, kerchief. *lightly*, undervalue.
on a low, on fire. *sloken*, slake, extinguish.

16. He has calld him forty marchmen bauld,
I trow they were of his ain name,
Except Sir Gilbert Elliott, calld
The Laird of Stobs, I mean the same.

17. He has calld him forty marchmen bauld,
Were kinsmen to the bauld Buccleuch,
With spur on heel, and splent on spauld,
And gleuves of green, and feathers blue

18. There were five and five before them a',
Wi hunting-horns and bugles bright;
And five and five came wi Buccleuch,
Like Warden's men, arrayed for fight.

19. And five and five like a mason-gang,
That carried the ladders lang and hie;
And five and five like broken men;
And so they reached the Woodhouselee.

20. And as we crossed the Bateable Land,
When to the English side we held,
The first o men that we met wi,
Whae sould it be but fause Sakelde!

21. "Where be ye gaun, ye hunters keen?"
Quo fause Sakelde; "come tell to me";
"We go to hunt an English stag,
Has trespassed on the Scots countrie."

22. "Where be ye gaun, ye marshal-men?"
Quo fause Sakelde; "come tell me true";

marchmen, borderers. *ain name, i.e.*, Scott.
splent, armor. *spauld*, shoulder.
five and five, i.e., there were four squads of ten men each.
broken men, outlaws.

"We go to catch a rank reiver,
Has broken faith wi the bauld Buccleuch."

23. "Where be ye gaun, ye mason-lads,
Wi a' your ladders lang and hie?"
"We gang to herry a corbie's nest,
That wons not far frae Woodhouselee."

24. "Where be ye gaun, ye broken men?"
Quo fause Sakelde; "come tell to me";
Now Dickie of Dryope led that band,
And nevir a word o lear had he.

25. "Why trespass ye on the English side?
Row-footed outlaws, stand!" quo he;
The neer a word had Dickie to say,
Sae he thrust the lance thro his fause bodie.

26. Then on we held for Carlisle toun,
And at Staneshaw-bank the Eden we crossed;
The water was great, and meikle of spait,
But the nevir a horse nor man we lost.

27. And when we reachd the Staneshaw-bank,
The wind was rising loud and hie;
And there the laird garrd leave our steeds,
For fear that they should stamp and nie.

28. And when we left the Staneshaw-bank,
The wind began full loud to blaw;
But 'twas wind and weet, and fire and sleet,
When we came beneath the castel-wa.

herry, harry, spoil. *corbie*, raven. *wons*, dwells.
nevir a word, etc., *i.e.*, Dickie was not talkative.
row-footed, rough-footed.
meikle of spait, high because of a freshet. *garrd*, made (us).

29. We crept on knees, and held our breath,
Till we placed the ladders against the wa;
And sae ready was Buccleuch himsell
To mount the first before us a'.

30. He has taen the watchman by the throat,
He flung him down upon the lead:
"Had there not been peace between our lands,
Upon the other side thou hadst gaed.

31. "Now sound out, trumpets!" quo Buccleuch;
"Let's waken Lord Scroope right merrilie!"
Then loud the Warden's trumpets blew,
O whae dare meddle wi' me?

32. Then speedilie to wark we gaed,
And raised the slogan ane and a',
And cut a hole thro a sheet of lead,
And so we wan to the castel-ha.

33. They thought King James and a' his men
Had won the house wi bow and spear;
It was but twenty Scots and ten,
That put a thousand in sic a stear.

34. Wi coulters and wi fore-hammers,
We garrd the bars bang merrilie,
Untill we came to the inner prison,
Where Willie o Kinmont he did lie.

35. And when we cam to the lower prison,
Where Willie o Kinmont he did lie,
"O sleep ye, wake ye, Kinmont Willie,
Upon the morn that thou's to die?"

O whae dare, etc., a popular song.
coulter, blade of a plough.
stear, fright.
fore-hammer, forge or sledge-h.

36. "O I sleep saft, and I wake aft,
It's lang since sleeping was fleyd frae me;
Gie my service back to my wyfe and bairns,
And a' gude fellows that speer for me."

37. Then Red Rowan has hente him up,
The starkest man in Teviotdale:
"Abide, abide now, Red Rowan,
Till of my Lord Scroop I take farewell.

38. "Farewell, farewell, my gude Lord Scroope!
My gude Lord Scroope, farewell!" he cried;
"I'll pay you for my lodging-maill,
When first we meet on the border-side."

39. Then shoulder high, with shout and cry,
We bore him down the ladder lang;
At every stride Red Rowan made,
I wot the Kinmont's airns playd clang.

40. "O mony a time," quo Kinmont Willie,
"I have ridden horse baith wild and wood;
But a rougher beast than Red Rowan
I ween my legs have neer bestrode.

41. "And mony a time," quo Kinmont Willie,
"I've pricked a horse out oure the furs;
But since the day I backed a steed,
I nevir wore sic cumbrous spurs."

42. We scarce had won the Staneshaw-bank,
When a' the Carlisle bells were rung,
And a thousand men, in horse and foot,
Cam wi the keen Lord Scroope along.

fleyd, fled. *speer*, inquire. *hente*, lifted.
starkest, strongest. *lodging-maill*, rent. *wood*, mad.

43. Buccleuch has turned to the Eden Water,
Even where it flowd frae bank to brim,
And he has plunged in wi a' his band,
And safely swam them thro the stream.

44. He turned him on the other side,
And at Lord Scroope his glove flung he:
"If ye like na my visit to merry England,
In fair Scotland come visit me!"

45. All sore astonished stood Lord Scroope,
He stood as still as rock of stane;
He scarcely dared to trew his eyes,
When thro the water they had gane.

46. "He's either himsell a devil frae hell,
Or else his mother a witch maun be;
I wad na have ridden that wan water
For a' the gowd in Christentie."

Scott's Minstrelsy, 1802

SIR PATRICK SPENS

The incidents perhaps took place about 1290

1. The King sits in Dumferling toune,
Drinking the blude-reid wine:
"O whar will I get guid sailor,
To sail this schip of mine?"

2. Up and spak an eldern knicht,
Sat at the kings richt kne:
"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor,
That sails upon the se."

trew, believe. *Dumferling toune*, Dunfermline palace.

3. The king has written a braid letter,
And signd it wi his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,
Was walking on the sand.

4. The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
The teir blinded his ee.

5. "O wha is this has don this deid,
This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o' the yeir,
To sail upon the se!

6. "Mak hast, mak haste, my mirry men all,
Our guid schip sails the morne:"
"O say na sae, my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme.

7. "Late, late yestreen I saw the new moone,
Wi the auld moon in hir arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
That we will cum to harme."

8. O our Scots nobles wer richt laith
To weet their cork-heild schoone;
Bot lang owre a' the play wer playd,
Thair hats they swam aboone.

9. O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi thair fans into their hand,
Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spence
Cum sailing to the land.

lauch, laugh.
owre, ere, before.
laith, loth.
swam aboone, floated above.

10. O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi thair gold kems in their hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
For they'll se thame na mair.

11. Haf owre, haf owre to Aberdour,
It's fiftie fadom deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi the Scots lords at his feit.

Percy's Reliques, 1765

BINNORIE: OR, THE TWO SISTERS

1. There were twa sisters sat in a bour;
Binnorie, O Binnorie!
There cam a knight to be their wooer,
By the bonnie milldams o' Binnorie.

2. He courted the eldest with glove and ring,
But he lo'd the youngest abune a' thing.

3. The eldest she was vexed sair,
And sair envied her sister fair.

4. Upon a morning fair and clear,
She cried upon her sister dear:

5. "O sister, sister, tak my hand,
And let's go down to the river-strand."

6. She's ta'en her by the lily hand,
And led her down to the river-strand.

7. The youngest stood upon a stane,
The eldest cam and push'd her in.

kems, combs.

8. "O sister, sister, reach your hand!
And ye sall be heir o' half my land:

9. "O sister, reach me but your glove!
And sweet William sall be your love."

10. Sometimes she sank, sometimes she swam,
Until she cam to the miller's dam.

11. Out then cam the miller's son,
And saw the fair maid soummin' in.

12. "O father, father, draw your dam!
There's either a mermaid or a milk-white swan."

13. The miller hasted and drew his dam,
And there he found a drown'd woman.

14. You couldna see her middle sma',
Her gowden girdle was sae braw.

15. You couldna see her lily feet,
Her gowden fringes were sae deep.

16. All amang her yellow hair
A string o' pearl was twisted rare.

17. You couldna see her fingers sma',
Wi' diamond rings they were cover'd a'.

18. And by there cam a harper fine,
That harpit to the king at dine.

19. And when he look'd that lady on,
He sigh'd and made a heavy moan.

soummin', swimming; *i.e.*, floating. *dine*, dinner.

20. He's made a harp of her breast-bane,
Whose sound wad melt a heart of stane.

21. He's ta'en three locks o' her yellow hair,
And wi' them strung his harp sae rare.

22. He went into her father's hall,
And there was the court assembled all.

23. He laid his harp upon a stane,
And straight it began to play by lane.

24. "O yonder sits my father, the King,
And yonder sits my mother, the Queen;

25. "And yonder stands my brother, Hugh,
And by him my William, sweet and true."

26. But the last tune that the harp play'd then
Binnorie, O Binnorie!
Was, "Woe to my sister, false Helen!"
By the bonnie milldams o' Binnorie.

Jamieson's Popular Ballads, 1806

THOMAS THE RHYMER

The version dates from c. 1700 (?)

1. True Thomas lay on Huntlie bank;
A ferlie he spied wi' his e'e;
And there he saw a ladye bright
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

2. Her skirt was o' the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o' the velvet fyne;

ferlie, marvel.

At ilka tett o' her horse's mane,
Hung fifty siller bells and nine.

3. True Thomas he pu'd aff his cap,
And louted low down on his knee:
"Hail to thee, Mary, Queen of Heaven!
For thy peer on earth could never be."

4. "O no, O no, Thomas," she said;
"That name does not belang to me;
I'm but the Queen o' fair Elfland,
That am hither come to visit thee.

5. "Harp and carp, Thomas," she said;
"Harp and carp along wi' me;
And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
Sure of your bodie I will be."

6. "Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird shall never daunten me."
Syne he has kiss'd her rosy lips,
All underneath the Eildon Tree.

7. "Now ye maun go wi' me," she said,
"True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me;
And ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro' weal or woe as may chance to be."

8. She's mounted on her milk-white steed,
She's ta'en true Thomas up behind;
And aye, whene'er her bridle rang,
The steed gaed swifter than the wind.

ilka, each.
Harp and carp, play and recite.
tett, tassel.
weird, spell or fate.

9. O they rade on, and farther on,
The steed gaed swifter than the wind,
Until they reach'd a desert wide,
And living land was left behind.

10. "Light down, light down now, true Thomas,
And lean your head upon my knee;
Abide ye there a little space,
And I will show you ferlies three.

11. "O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset wi' thorns and briers?
That is the Path of Righteousness,
Though after it but few inquires.

12. "And see ye not yon braid, braid road,
That lies across the lily leven?
That is the Path of Wickedness,
Though some call it the Road to Heaven.

13. "And see ye not yon bonny road
That winds about the fernie brae?
That is the Road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

14. "But, Thomas, ye sall haud your tongue,
Whatever ye may hear or see;
For speak ye word in Elflyn-land,
Ye'll ne'er win back to your ain countree."

15. O they rade on, and farther on,
And they waded rivers abune the knee;
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

leven, lawn.

16. It was mirk, mirk night, there was nae starlight,
They waded thro' red blude to the knee;
For a' the blude that's shed on the earth
Rins through the springs o' that countree.

17. Syne they came to a garden green,
And she pu'd an apple frae a tree:
"Take this for thy wages, true Thomas;
It will give thee the tongue that can never lee."

18. "My tongue is my ain," true Thomas he said;
"A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!
I neither dought to buy or sell
At fair or tryst where I might be.

19. "I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
Nor ask of grace from fair ladye!" —
"Now haud thy peace, Thomas," she said,
"For as I say, so must it be."

20. He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair o' shoon of the velvet green;
And till seven years were gane and past,
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

Scott's Minstrelsy, 1802–03

THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL

1. There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she;
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
And sent them oer the sea.

dought, could, *i.e.*, was good at, buying, etc. *even*, smooth (?).

2. They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely ane,
When word came to the carline wife
That her three sons were gane.

3. They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely three,
When word came to the carlin wife
That her sons she'd never see.

4. "I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fashes in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me,
In earthly flesh and blood."

5. It fell about the Martinmass,
When nights are lang and mirk,
The carlin wife's three sons came hame,
And their hats were o' the birk.

6. It neither grew in syke nor ditch,
Nor yet on ony sheugh;
But at the gates o Paradise,
That birk grew fair eneugh.

. . . . .

7. "Blow up the fire, my maidens!
Bring water from the well!
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well."

8. And she has made to them a bed,
She's made it large and wide,

carline, old woman.
Martinmas is November 11.
syke, a marshy place.
fashes, storms.
birk, birch.
sheugh, furrow or ditch.

And she's ta'en her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bed-side.

. . . . .

9. Up then crew the red, red cock,
And up and crew the gray;
The eldest to the youngest said,
"'Tis time we were away."

10. The cock he hadna crawed but once,
And clappd his wings at a',
When the youngest to the eldest said,
"Brother, we must awa.

11. "The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
The channerin worm doth chide;
Gin we be mist out o our place,
A sair pain we maun bide.

12. "Fare ye weel, my mother dear!
Fareweel to barn and byre!
And fare ye weel, the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire!"

Scott's Minstrelsy, 1802

THE TWA CORBIES

1. As I was walking all alane
I heard twa corbies making a mane:
The tane unto the tither did say,
"Whar sall we gang and dine the day?"

2. "— In behint yon auld fail dyke
I wot there lies a new-slain knight;

channerin, fretting. *bide*, endure. *corbies*, ravens.
mane, moan. *fail*, turf.

And naebody kens that he lies there
But his hawk, his hound, and his lady fair.

3. "His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,
His lady's ta'en anither mate,
So we may mak our dinner sweet.

4. "Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,
And I'll pike out his bonny blue e'en:
Wi' ae lock o' his gowden hair
We'll theek our nest when it grows bare.

5. "Mony a one for him maks nane,
But mane sall ken whar he is gane:
O'er his white banes, when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair."

Scott's Minstrelsy, 1803

EDWARD

1. "Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
Edward, Edward,
Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
And why sae sad gang yee O?"
"O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
And I had nae mair bot hee O."

2. "Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,
Edward, Edward,
Your haukis bluid was never sae reid,
My deir son I tell thee O."

hause, neck. *theek*, thatch.

"O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
That erst was sae fair and frie O."

3. "Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,
Edward, Edward,
Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,
Sum other dule ye drie O."
"O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Alas, and wae is mee O!"

4. "And whatten penance wul ye drie, for that,
Edward, Edward,
And whatten penance wul ye drie, for that?
My deir son, now tell me O."
"Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
Mither, mither,
Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
And Ile fare ovir the sea O."

5. "And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and your ha,
Edward, Edward,
And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and your ha,
That were sae fair to see O?"
"Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa,
Mither, mither,
Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa,
For here nevir mair maun I bee O."

6. "And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,
Edward, Edward,

dule, dool, sorrow. *drie*, suffer.

And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,
Whan ye gang ovir the sea O?"
"The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,
Mither, mither,
The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,
For thame nevir mair wul I see O."

7. "And what wul ye leive to your ain mither dear,
Edward, Edward,
And what wul ye leive to your ain mither dear?
My deir son, now tell me O."
"The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Mither, mither,
The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Sic counseils ye gave to me O."

Percy's Reliques, 1765

LORD RANDAL

1. "O where hae ye been, Lord Randal, my son?
O where hae ye been, my handsome young man?"
"I hae been to the wild wood; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down."

2. "Where gat ye your dinner, Lord Randal, my son?
Where gat ye dinner, my handsome young man?"
"I din'd wi my true love; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down."

3. "What gat ye to your dinner, Lord Randal, my son?
What gat ye to your dinner, my handsome young man?"

"I gat eels boiled in broo; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down."

4. "What became of your bloodhounds, Lord Randal, my son?
What became of your bloodhounds, my handsome young man?"
"O they swelld and they died; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down."

5. "O I fear ye are poisond, Lord Randal, my son!
O I fear ye are poisoned, my handsome young man!"
"O yes! I am poisoned; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wald lie down."

Scott's Minstrelsy, 1802–03

BONNIE GEORGE CAMPBELL

1. High upon Highlands,
and low upon Tay,
Bonnie George Campbell
rade out on a day.

2. Saddled and bridled
and gallant rade he;
Hame cam his guid horse,
but never cam he.

3. Out cam his auld mither
greeting fu' sair,
And out cam his bonnie bride
riving her hair.

riving, tearing.

4. Saddled and bridled
and booted rade he;
Toom hame cam the saddle,
but never cam he.

5. "My meadow lies green,
and my corn is unshorn,
My barn is to build,
and my babe is unborn."

6. Saddled and bridled
and booted rade he;
Toom hame cam the saddle,
but never cam he.

Motherwell's Minstrelsy, 1827

BESSIE BELL AND MARY GRAY

Incidents c. 1645

1. O Bessie Bell and Mary Gray,
They war twa bonnie lasses!
They bigget a bower on yon burn-brae,
And theekit it oer wi rashes.

2. They theekit it oer wi rashes green,
They theekit it oer wi heather;
But the pest cam frae the burrows-town,
And slew them baith thegither.

3. They thought to lie in Methven kirk-yard
Amang their noble kin;
But they maun lye in Stronach-haugh,
To biek forenent the sin.

toom, empty. *bigget*, built. *theekit*, thatched.
Stronach-haugh, Dranoch-h. A haugh is flat ground by a river.
to bick, etc., to bake against (in the rays of) the sun.

4. And Bessie Bell and Mary Gray,
They war twa bonnie lasses;
They biggit a bower on yon burn-brae,
And theekit it oer wi rashes.

Sharpe's Ballad Book, 1823

LAMENT OF THE BORDER WIDOW

c. 1529 (?)

1. My love he built me a bonny bower,
And clad it a' wi' lily flower;
A brawer bower ye ne'er did see
Than my true love he built for me.

2. There came a man, by middle day,
He spied his sport, and went away;
And brought the King that very night,
Who brake my bower and slew my knight.

3. He slew my knight, to me sae dear;
He slew my knight, and poin'd his gear;
My servants all for life did flee,
And left me in extremitie.

4. I sew'd his sheet, making my mane;
I watch'd his corpse, myself alane;
I watch'd his body night and day;
No living creature came that way.

5. I took his body on my back,
And whiles I gaed, and whiles I sat;
I digg'd a grave, and laid him in,
And happ'd him wi' the sod sae green.

poin'd, seized. *happ'd*, covered.

6. But think na ye my hèart was sair,
When I laid the moul' on his yellow hair?
O think na ye my heart was wae,
When I turn'd about, awa' to gae?

7. Nae living man I'll love again,
Since that my lovely knight is slain;
Wi' ae lock of his yellow hair
I'll chain my heart for evermair.

Scott's Minstrelsy, 1802–03.

HELEN OF KIRCONNELL

Incident 16th century (?)

1. I wish I were where Helen lies,
Night and day on me she cries;
O that I were where Helen lies,
On fair Kirconnell lea!

2. Curst be the heart that thought the thought,
And curst the hand that fired the shot,
When in my arms burd Helen dropt,
And died to succour me!

3. O think na ye my heart was sair,
When my Love dropp'd and spak nae mair?
There did she swoon wi' meikle care,
On fair Kirconnell lea.

4. As I went down the water side,
None but my foe to be my guide,
None but my foe to be my guide,
On fair Kirconnell lea;

burd, maiden, lass.

5. I lighted down my sword to draw,
I hackèd him in pieces sma',
I hackèd him in pieces sma',
For her sake that died for me.

6. O Helen fair, beyond compare!
I'll mak a garland o' thy hair,
Shall bind my heart for evermair,
Until the day I die!

7. O that I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries;
Out of my bed she bids me rise,
Says, "Haste, and come to me!"

8. O Helen fair! O Helen chaste!
If I were with thee, I'd be blest,
Where thou lies low and taks thy rest,
On fair Kirconnell lea.

9. I wish my grave were growing green,
A winding-sheet drawn owre my e'en,
And I in Helen's arms lying,
On fair Kirconnell lea.

10. I wish I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries;
And I am weary of the skies,
For her sake that died for me.

Scott's Minstrelsy, 1802–03

FINE FLOWERS IN THE VALLEY

First printed 1787

1. She sat down below a thorn,
Fine flowers in the valley;

And there she has her sweet babe born,
And the green leaves they grow rarely.

2. "Smile na sae sweet, my bonny babe,
An ye smile sae sweet, ye'll smile me dead."

3. She's ta'en out her little penknife,
And twinn'd the sweet babe o' its life.

4. She's howket a grave by the light o' the moon,
And there she's buried her sweet babe in.

5. As she was going to the church,
She saw a sweet babe in the porch.

6. "O sweet babe, if thou wert mine,
I wad cleed thee in silk and sabelline."

7 "O mother mine, when I was thine,"
Fine flowers in the valley;
"You didna prove to me sae kind."
And the green leaves they grow rarely. .

Johnson's Musical Museum, 1787–1803

BARBARA ALLEN'S CRUELTY

Bef. 1665

1. In Scarlet town, where I was born,
There was a fair maid dwellin',
Made every youth cry *Well-a-way!*
Her name was Barbara Allen.

2. All in the merry month of May,
When green buds they were swellin',

twinn'd . . . o', separated from. *sabelline*, sable.

Young Jemmy Grove on his death-bed lay,
For love of Barbara Allen.

3. He sent his man in to her then,
To the town where she was dwellin',
"O haste and come to my master dear,
If your name be Barbara Allen."

4. So slowly, slowly rase she up,
And slowly she came nigh him,
And when she drew the curtain by —
"Young man, I think you're dyin'."

5. "O it's I am sick and very very sick,
And it's all for Barbara Allen."
"O the better for me ye'se never be,
Tho' your heart's blood were a-spillin'.

6. "O dinna ye mind, young man," says she,
"When the red wine ye were fillin',
That ye made the healths go round and round,
And slighted Barbara Allen?"

7. He turn'd his face unto the wall,
And death was with him dealin':
"Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,
And be kind to Barbara Allen!"

8. As she was walking o'er the fields,
She heard the dead-bell knellin';
And every jow the dead-bell gave
Cried "Woe to Barbara Allen!"

jow, toll.

9. "O mother, mother, make my bed,
O make it saft and narrow;
My love has died for me to-day,
I'll die for him to-morrow."

Ramsay's Tea-Table Miscellany, 1724

MARY HAMILTON

18th cent.

1. Word's gane to the kitchen,
And word's gane to the ha,
That Marie Hamilton has born a bairn
To the hichest Stewart of a'.

2. She's tyed it in her apron
And she's thrown it in the sea;
Says, "Sink ye, swim ye, bonny wee babe,
You'll ne'er get mair o me."

3. Down then cam the auld Queen,
Goud tassels tying her hair;
"O Marie, where's the bonny wee babe
That I heard greet sae sair?"

4. "There was never a babe intill my room,
As little designs to be;
It was but a touch o my sair side,
Came o'er my fair bodie."

5. "O Marie, put on your robes o black,
Or else your robes o brown,
For ye maun gang wi me the night,
To see fair Edinbro town."

hichest, highest. *greet*, cry.

6. "I winna put on my robes o black,
Nor yet my robes o brown;
But I'll put on my robes o white,
To shine thro Edinbro town."

7. When she gaed up the Canongate,
She laughed loud laughters three;
But when she cam down the Canongate,
The tear blinded her ee.

8. When she gaed up the Parliament stair,
The heel cam aff her shee;
And lang or she cam down again
She was condemned to dee.

9. When she cam down the Canongate,
The Canongate sae free,
Many a ladie lookd o'er her window,
Weeping for this ladie.

10. "Make never meen for me," she says,
"Make never meen for me;
Seek never grace frae a graceless face,
For that ye'll never see.

11. "Bring me a bottle of wine," she says,
"Tha best that eer ye hae,
That I may drink to my weil-wishers,
And they may drink to me.

12. "And here's to the jolly sailor lad
That sails upon the faem;
And let not my father nor mother get wit
But that I shall come again.

meen, moan.

13. "And here's to the jolly sailor lad
That sails upon the sea;
But let not my father nor mother get wit
O the death that I maun dee.

14. "Oh little did my mother think,
The day she cradled me,
What lands I was to travel through,
What death I was to dee.

15. "Oh little did my father think,
The day he held up me,
What lands I was to travel through,
What death I was to dee.

16. "Last night I washd the Queen's feet,
And gently laid her down;
And a' the thanks I've gotten the nicht
To be hangd in Edinbro town!

17. "Last nicht there was four Maries,
The nicht there'll be but three;
There was Marie Seton, and Marie Beton,
And Marie Carmichael, and me."

Sharpe's Ballad Book, 1824

THE DOWIE DENS O' YARROW

1. Late at e'en, drinking the wine,
And ere they paid the lawing,
They set a combat them between,
To fight it in the dawing.

dowie, doleful.
lawing, charge, reckoning.
dens, glens, dingles.
dawing, dawning.

2. "What though ye be my sister's lord?
We'll cross our swords to-morrow."
"What though my wife your sister be?
I'll meet ye then on Yarrow."

3. "Oh, stay at hame, my ain gude lord!
Oh, stay, my ain dear marrow!
My cruel brother will you betray
On the dowie banks o' Yarrow."

4. "Oh, fare ye weel, my lady dear!
And put aside your sorrow;
For if I gae, I'll sune return
Frae the bonny banks o' Yarrow."

5. She kissed his cheek, she kaimed his hair,
As oft she'd done before, O;
She belted him wi' his gude brand,
And he's awa' to Yarrow.

6. When he gaed up the Tennies bank,
As he gaed many a morrow,
Nine armed men lay in a den,
On the dowie braes o' Yarrow.

7. "Oh, come ye here to hunt or hawk
The bonny Forest thorough?
Or come ye here to wield your brand
Upon the banks o' Yarrow?"

8. "I come not here to hunt or hawk,
As oft I've done before O;
But I come here to wield my brand,
Upon the banks o' Yarrow."

marrow, husband or wife. *dowie*, doleful.

9. "If ye attack me nine to ane,
That God may send ye sorrow! —
Yet will I fight while stand I may,
On the bonny banks o' Yarrow."

10. Two has he hurt, and three has slain,
On the bloody braes o' Yarrow;
But the stubborn knight crept in behind,
And pierced his body thorough.

11. "Gae hame, gae hame, you brither John,
And tell your sister sorrow, —
To come and lift her leafu' lord,
On the dowie banks o' Yarrow."

12. Her brither John gaed o'er yon hill,
As oft he'd done before, O;
There he met his sister dear,
Cam' rinnin' fast to Yarrow.

13. "I dreamt a dream last night," she says:
"I wish it binna sorrow;
I dreamt I pu'd the heather green
Wi' my true love on Yarrow."

14. "I'll read your dream, sister," he says;
"I'll read it into sorrow:
Ye're bidden go take up your love;
He's sleeping sound on Yarrow."

15. She's torn the ribbons frae her head
That were baith braid and narrow;
She's kilted up her lang claithing,
And she's awa' to Yarrow.

16. She's ta'en him in her armes twa,
And gi'en him kisses thorough;
She sought to bind his many wounds,
But he lay dead on Yarrow.

17. "Oh, haud your tongue," her father says,
"And let be a' your sorrow;
I'll wed you to a better lord
Than him ye lost on Yarrow."

18. "Oh, haud your tongue, father," she says;
"Far worse ye mak' my sorrow;
A better lord could never be
Than him that lies on Yarrow."

19. She kissed his lips, she kaimed his hair,
As aft she'd done before, O;
And there wi' grief her heart did break,
Upon the banks o' Yarrow.

Scott's Minstrelsy, 1802–03

ANNAN WATER

Prob. 18th cent.

1. "Annan Water's wading-deep,
And my love Annie's wondrous bonny;
I will keep my tryst to-night,
And win the heart o' lovely Annie."

2. He's loupen on his bonny grey,
He rade the right gate and the ready;
For a' the storm he wadna stay,
For seeking o' his bonny lady.

loupen, leaped. *gate*, path, road. *ready*, direct.

3. And he has ridden o'er field and fell,
Through muir and moss, and stones and mire;
His spurs o' steel were sair to bide,
And frae her four feet flew the fire.

4. "My bonny grey, noo play your part!
Gin ye be the steed that wins my dearie,
Wi' corn and hay ye'se be fed for aye,
And never spur sall mak' you wearie."

5. The grey was a mare, and a right gude mare;
But when she wan the Annan Water,
She couldna hae found the ford that night,
Had a thousand merks been wadded at her.

6. "O boatman, boatman, put off your boat,
Put off your boat for gouden money!"
But for a' the goud in fair Scotland,
He dared na' tak' him through to Annie.

7. "O I was sworn sae late yestreen,
Not by a single aith, but mony,
I'll cross the drumly stream to-night,
Or never could I face my honey."

8. The side was stey, and the bottom deep,
Frae bank to brae the water pouring;
The bonny grey mare she swat for fear,
For she heard the water-kelpie roaring.

9. He spurred her forth into the flood,
I wot she swam both strong and steady;
But the stream was broad, her strength did fail,
And he never saw his bonny lady.

sair to bide, hard to endure. *wadded at*, wagered on.
drumly, troubled. *stey*, steep. *water-kelpie*, river goblin.

10. O wae betide the frush saugh wand!
And wae betide the bush of brier!
That bent and brake into his hand,
When strength of man and horse did tire.

11. And wae betide ye, Annan Water!
This night ye are a drumly river;
But over thee we'll build a brig,
That ye nae mair true love may sever.

Scott's Minstrelsy, 1802–03

THE LOWLANDS O' HOLLAND

17th cent. (?)

1. "The love that I hae chosen,
I'll therewith be content;
The saut sea sall be frozen
Before that I repent.
Repent it sall I never
Until the day I dee;
But the Lawlands o' Holland
Hae twinn'd my love and me.

2. "My love he built a bonny ship,
And set her to the main,
Wi' twenty-four brave mariners
To sail her out and hame.
But the weary wind began to rise,
The sea began to rout,
And my love and his bonny ship
Turned withershins about.

3. "There sall nae mantle cross my back,
No kaim gae in my hair,

frush, brittle.
twinn'd, separated.
saugh, sallow (willow).
withershins, the wrong way.

Neither sall coal nor candle-light
Shine in my bower mair;
Nor sall I choose anither love
Until the day I dee,
Sin' the Lawlands o' Holland
Hae twinn'd my love and me."

4. "Noo haud your tongue, my daughter dear,
Be still and bide content;
There's ither lads in Galloway;
Ye needna sair lament."
"O there is nane in Galloway,
There's nane at a' for me.
I never lo'ed a lad but ane,
And he's drown'd in the sea."

Johnson's Musical Museum, 1787–1803

THE WRAGGLE TAGGLE GIPSIES

1. Three gipsies stood at the Castle gate,
They sang so high, they sang so low;
The lady sate in her chamber late,
Her heart it melted away as snow.

2. They sang so sweet, they sang so shrill,
That fast her tears began to flow.
And she laid down her silken gown,
Her golden rings, and all her show.

3. She pluckëd aff her high-heel'd shoes,
A-made of Spanish leather, O.
She would in the street, with her bare, bare feet;
All out in the wind and weather, O.

4. "O saddle to me my milk-white steed,
And go and fetch my pony, O!

That I may ride and seek my bride,
Who is gone with the wraggle taggle gipsies, O!"

5. O he rode high, and he rode low,
He rode thro wood and copses too,
Until he came to an open field,
And there he espied his lady, O!

6. "What makes you leave your house and land?
Your golden treasures for to go?
What makes you leave your new-wedded lord,
To follow the wraggle taggle gipsies, O?"

7. "What care I for my house and my land?
What care I for my treasure, O?
What care I for my new-wedded lord, —
I'm off with the wraggle taggle gipsies, O!"

8. "Last night you slept on a goose-feather bed,
With the sheet turned down so bravely, O!
And to-night you'll sleep in a cold open field,
Along with the wraggle taggle gipsies, O!"

9. "What care I for a goose-feather bed,
With the sheet turned down so bravely, O?
For to-night I shall sleep in a cold open field,
Along with the wraggle taggle gipsies, O!"

A late version of Johnnie Faa

WALY, WALY

Bef. 1670.

1. O waly, waly, up the bank,
And waly, waly, doun the brae,

for to go, to forgo (?) *waly*, alas! (pronounced *wawly*).

And waly, waly, yon burn-side,
Where I and my Love wont to gae!
I lean'd my back unto an aik.
I thocht it was a trustie tree;
But first it bow'd and syne it brak —
Sae my true love did lichtlie me.

2. O waly, waly, gin love be bonnie
A little time while it is new!
But when 'tis auld it waxeth cauld,
And fades awa' like morning dew.
O wherefore should I busk my heid,
Or wherefore should I kame my hair?
For my true Love has me forsook,
And says he'll never lo'e me mair.

3. Now Arthur's Seat sall be my bed,
The sheets sall ne'er be 'filed by me;
Saint Anton's well sall be my drink;
Since my true Love has forsaken me.
Marti'mas wind, when wilt thou blaw,
And shake the green leaves aff the tree?
O gentle Death, when wilt thou come?
For of my life I am wearie.

4. 'Tis not the frost, that freezes fell,
Not blawing snaw's inclemencie,
'Tis not sic cauld that makes me cry;
But my Love's heart grown cauld to me.
When we cam in by Glasgow toun,
We were a comely sicht to see;
My Love was clad in the black velvet,
And I myself in cramasie.

aik, oak.
busk, make trim.
lichtlie, treat with contempt.
cramasie, crimson.

5. But had I wist, before I kist,
That love had been sae ill to win,
I had lock'd my heart in a case o' gowd,
And pinn'd it wi' a siller pin.
And O! if my young babe were born,
And set upon the nurse's knee;
And I mysel' were dead and gane,
And the green grass growing over me!

Ramsay's Tea-Table Miscellany, 1724

TILL AND TWEED

Says Tweed to Till —
"What gars ye rin sae still?"
Says Till to Tweed —
"Though ye rin with speed
And I rin slaw,
For ae man that ye droon
I droon twa."

Author unknown

ELIZABETHAN PERIOD
1580–1620

THE LAST HOUR OF FAUSTUS

c. 1589

Faustus. Ah, Faustus,
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damned perpetually!
Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of Heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come;
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again and make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his soul!
O lente, lente, currite noctis equi!
The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
The Devil will come, and Faustus must be damned.
O, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?
See, see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop would save my soul — half a drop; ah, my Christ!
Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
Yet will I call on him: O spare me, Lucifer! —
Where is it now? 'tis gone; and see where God
Stretcheth out his arm, and bends his ireful brows!
Mountain and hills come, come and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!
No! No!
Then will I headlong run into the earth;
Earth gape! O no, it will not harbor me!
You stars that reigned at my nativity,
Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,

Now draw up Faustus like a foggy mist
Into the entrails of yon laboring clouds,
That when they vomit forth into the air,
My limbs may issue from their smoky mouths,
So that my soul may but ascend to Heaven.

(*The clock strikes the half hour.*)

Ah, half the hour is past! 'twill all be past anon!
O God!
If thou wilt not have mercy on my soul,
Yet for Christ's sake whose blood hath ransomed me,
Impose some end to my incessant pain;
Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years —
A hundred thousand, and — at last — be saved!
O, no end is limited to damnèd souls!
Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?
Or why is this immortal that thou hast?
Ah, Pythagoras' metempsychosis! were that true,
This soul should fly from me, and I be changed
Unto some brutish beast! all beasts are happy,
For, when they die,
Their souls are soon dissolved in elements;
But mine must live, still to be plagued in hell.
Curst be the parents that engendered me!
No, Faustus: curse thyself: curse Lucifer
That hath deprived thee of the joys of Heaven.

(*The clock strikes twelve.*)

O, it strikes, it strikes! Now, body, turn to air,
Or Lucifer will bear thee straight to hell.

(*Thunder and lightning.*)

O soul, be changed into little water-drops,
And fall into the ocean — ne'er be found.

(*Enter Devils.*)

My God! my God! look not so fierce on me!

still, ever, always.

Adders and serpents, let me breathe awhile!
Ugly hell, gape not! come not, Lucifer!
I'll burn my books! — Ah Mephistophilis!

(*Exeunt Devils with Faustus.*)

Christopher Marlowe (from Doctor Faustus)

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

c. 1585.

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountains yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, to whose falls,
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers and a kirtle
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle:

A gown made of the finest wool,
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning;
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

Christopher Marlowe (*in England's Helicon*)

THE NYMPH'S REPLY TO THE SHEPHERD

c. 1589 (?)

If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move,
To live with thee and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage, and rocks grow cold;
And Philomel becometh dumb;
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward Winter reckoning yields;
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move,
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last, and love still breed,
Had joys no date, nor age no need,

Then these delights my mind might move,
To live with thee and be thy love.

Ignoto (*Sir Walter Raleigh?*) (*in England's Helicon*)

FAREWELL TO ARMS

1590

His golden locks time hath to silver turned;
O time too swift, O swiftness never ceasing!
His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurned,
But spurned in vain; youth waneth by increasing:
Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading seen;
Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.

His helmet now shall make a hive for bees;
And, lovers' sonnets turned to holy psalms,
A man-at-arms must now serve on his knees,
And feed on prayërs, which are age his alms:
But though from court to cottage he depart,
His saint is sure of his unspotted heart.

And when he saddest sits in homely cell,
He'll teach his swains this carol for a song —
"Bless'd be the hearts that wish my sovereign well,
Cursed be the souls that think her any wrong."
Goddess, allow this agëd man his right,
To be your beadsman now that was your knight.

George Peele (*from Polyhymnia*)

SPRING

c. 1592

Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant king;
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,

age his, *i.e.*, age's.

Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing,
Cuckoo, jug, jug, pu-we, to-whitta-whoo!

The palm and may make country houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay,
Cuckoo, jug, jug, pu-we, to-whitta-whoo!

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
In every street these tunes our ears do greet,
Cuckoo, jug, jug, pu-we, to-whitta whoo!

Thomas Nashe (in Summer's Last Will and Testament)

FROM DEATH'S SUMMONS

c. 1592

Beauty is but a flower,
Which wrinkles will devour:
Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair;
Dust hath closed Helen's eye:
I am sick, I must die.
Lord have mercy on us!

Strength stoops unto the grave:
Worms feed on Hector brave;
Swords may not fight with fate;
Earth still holds ope her gate.
Come, come, the bells do cry,
I am sick, I must die.
Lord have mercy on us!

Thomas Nashe (in Summer's Last Will and Testament)

palm, sallow, hedge-willow (?). *may*, hawthorn.
gate, the grave.

TO PHYLLIS, THE FAIR SHEPHERDESS

1593

My Phyllis hath the morning sun,
  At first to look upon her;
And Phyllis hath morn-waking birds
  Her risings for to honor.
My Phyllis hath prime-feathered flowers
  That smile when she treads on them;
And Phyllis hath a gallant flock
  That leaps since she doth own them.
But Phyllis hath so hard a heart —
  Alas that she should have it! —
As yields no mercy to desart,
  Nor grace to those that crave it.
Sweet sun, when thou look'st on,
Pray her regard my moan;
Sweet birds, when you sing to her,
To yield some pity, woo her;
Sweet flowers whenas she treads on,
Tell her, her beauty deads one,
And if in life her love she nill agree me,
Pray her, before I die she will come see me.

Thomas Lodge

PROTHALAMION

1596

Calme was the day, and through the trembling ayre
Sweete-breathing Zephyrus did softly play,
A gentle spirit, that lightly did delay
Hot Titans beames, which then did glyster fayre;
When I, (whom sullein care,
Through discontent of my long fruitlesse stay
In Princes Court, and expectations vayne

Of idle hopes, which still doe fly away,
Like empty shaddowes, did afflict my brayne,)
Walkt forth to ease my payne
Along the shoare of silver streaming Themmes;
Whose rutty Bancke, the which his River hemmes,
Was paynted all with variable flowers,
And all the meades adorned with daintie gemmes
Fit to deck maydens bowres,
And crowne their Paramours
Against the Brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end my Song.

There, in a Meadow, by the Rivers side,
A Flocke of Nymphes I chauncèd to espy,
All lovely Daughters of the Flood thereby,
With goodly greenish locks, all loose untyde,
As each had bene a Bryde;
And each one had a little wicker basket,
Made of fine twigs, entraylèd curiously,
In which they gathered flowers to fill their flasket,
And with fine Fingers cropt full feateously
The tender stalkes on hye.
Of every sort, which in that Meadow grew,
They gathered some; the Violet, pallid blew,
The little Dazie, that at evening closes,
The virgin Lillie, and the Primrose true,
With store of vermeil Roses,
To decke their Bridegromes posies
Against the Brydale day, which was not long:
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end my Song.

With that I saw two Swannes of goodly hewe
Come softly swimming downe along the Lee;
Two fairer Birds I yet did never see;

rutty, rooty. *is not long*, is not far off. *flasket*, little basket.

The snow, which doth the top of Pindus strew,
Did never whiter shew;
Nor Jove himselfe, when he a Swan would be,
For love of Leda, whiter did appeare;
Yet Leda was (they say) as white as he,
Yet not so white as these, nor nothing neare;
So purely white they were,
That even the gentle streame, the which them bare,
Seem'd foule to them, and bad his billowes spare
To wet their silken feathers, least they might
Soyle their fayre plumes with water not so fayre,
And marre their beauties bright,
That shone as heavens light,
Against their Brydale day, which was not long:
Sweete Themmes! runne softly till I end my Song.

Eftsoones the Nymphes, which now had Flowers their fill,
Ran all in haste to see that silver brood,
As they came floating on the Christal Flood;
Whom when they sawe, they stood amazèd still,
Their wondring eyes to fill;
Them seem'd they never saw a sight so fayre,
Of Fowles, so lovely, that they sure did deeme
Them heavenly borne, or to be that same payre
Which through the Skie draw Venus silver Teeme;
For sure they did not seeme
To be begot of any earthly Seede,
But rather Angels, or of Angels breede;
Yet were they bred of Somers-heat, they say,
In sweetest Season, when each Flower and weede
The earth did fresh aray;
So fresh they seem'd as day,
Even as their Brydale day, which was not long:
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end my Song.

Somers-heat, a pun on Somerset, the name of the two brides.

Then forth they all out of their baskets drew
Great store of Flowers, the honor of the field,
That to the sense did fragrant odours yield,
All which upon those goodly Birds they threw
And all the Waves did strew,
That like old Peneus Waters they did seeme,
When downe along by pleasant Tempes shore,
Scattered with Flowers, through Thessaly they streeme,
That they appeare, through Lillies plenteous store,
Like a Brydes Chamber flore.
Two of those Nymphes, meane while, two Garlands bound
Of freshest Flowres which in that Mead they found,
The which presenting all in trim Array,
Their snowie Foreheads therewithall they crownd,
Whil'st one did sing this Lay,
Prepar'd against that Day,
Against their Brydale day, which was not long:
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end my Song.

"Ye gentle Birdes! the worlds faire ornament,
And heavens glorie, whom this happie hower
Doth leade into your lovers blisfull bower,
Joy may you have, and gentle hearts content
Of your loves couplement;
And let faire Venus, that is Queene of love,
With her heart-quelling Sonne upon you smile,
Whose smile, they say, hath vertue to remove
All Loves dislike, and friendships faultie guile
For ever to assoile.
Let endlesse Peace your steadfast hearts accord,
And blessèd Plentie wait upon your bord;

assoile, absolve.

And let your bed with pleasures chaste abound,
That fruitfull issue may to you afford,
Which may your foes confound,
And make your joyes redound
Upon your Brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end my Song."

So ended she; and all the rest around
To her redoubled that her undersong,
Which said their brydale day should not be long:
And gentle Eccho from the neighbour ground
Their accents did resound.
So forth those joyous Birdes did passe along,
Adowne the Lee, that to them murmurde low,
As he would speake, but that he lackt a tong,
Yet did by signes his glad affection show,
Making his streame run slow.
And all the foule which in his flood did dwell
Gan flock about these twaine, that did excell
The rest, as far as Cynthia doth shend
The lesser starres. So they, enrangèd well,
Did on those two attend,
And their best service lend
Against their wedding day, which was not long:
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end my Song.

At length they all to mery London came,
To mery London, my most kindly Nurse,
That to me gave this Lifes first native sourse,
Though from another place I take my name,
An house of auncient fame:
There when they came, whereas those bricky towres
The which on Themmes brode aged backe doe ryde,

shend, put to shame.
another place, Spenser claimed kinship with the Spencers of Althorpe.

Where now the studious Lawyers have their bowers,
There whylome wont the Templer Knights to byde,
Till they decayd through pride:
Next whereunto there stands a stately place,
Where oft I gaynèd giftes and goodly grace
Of that great Lord, which therein wont to dwell,
Whose want too well now feeles my freendles case;
But ah! here fits not well
Olde woes, but joyes, to tell
Against the Brydale daye, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end my Song.

Yet therein now doth lodge a noble Peer,
Great Englands glory, and the Worlds wide wonder,
Whose dreadfull name late through all Spaine did thunder
And Hercules two pillars standing neere
Did make to quake and feare:
Faire branch of Honor, flower of Chevalrie!
That fillest England with thy triumphes fame,
Joy have thou of thy noble victorie,
And endlesse happinesse of thine owne name
That promiseth the same;
That through thy prowesse, and victorious armes,
Thy country may be freed from forraine armes,
And great Elisaes glorious name may ring
Through al the world, fil'd with thy wide Alarmes,
Which some brave muse may sing
To ages following,
Upon the Brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end my Song.

great Lord, the Earl of Leicester. *noble Peer*, the Earl of Essex. lines 147–9, a reference to the capture of Cadiz, in June 1596.

From those high Towers this noble Lord issùing,
Like radiant Hesper, when his golden hayre
In th' Ocean billowes he hath bathèd fayre,
Descended to the Rivers open viewing,
With a great traine ensuing.
Above the rest were goodly to bee seene
Two gentle Knights of lovely face and feature,
Beseeming well the bower of anie Queene,
With gifts of wit, and ornaments of nature,
Fit for so goodly stature,
That like the twins of Jove they seem'd in sight,
Which decke the Bauldricke of the Heavens bright;
They two, forth pacing to the Rivers side,
Received those two faire Brides, their Loves delight;
Which, at th' appointed tyde,
Each one did make his Bryde
Against their Brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes! runne softly, till I end my Song.

Edmund Spenser

WHEN SHE SMILES

1595

Mark when she smiles, with amiable cheare,
And tell me whereto can ye lyken it;
When on each eyelid sweetly doe appeare
An hundred Graces as in shade to sit.
Lykest it seemeth, in my simple wit,
Unto the fayre sunshine in somers day;
That, when a dreadfull storm away is flit,
Thrugh the broad world doth spred his goodly ray;
At sight whereof, each bird that sits on spray,
And every beast that to his den was fled,
Comes forth afresh out of their late dismay,
And to thy light lift up their drouping hed

So my storme-beaten hart likewise is cheared
With that sunshine, when cloudy looks are cleared.

Edmund Spenser (*Amoretti*, XL)

THE TRUE FAIR

1595

Men call you fair, and you do credit it,
For that yourself ye daily such do see:
But the true fair, that is the gentle wit
And virtuous mind, is much more praised of me:
For all the rest, however fair it be,
Shall turn to nought and lose that glorious hue;
But only that is permanent and free
From frail corruption that doth flesh ensue.
That is true beauty; that doth argue you
To be divine, and borne of heavenly seed;
Derived from that fair Spirit from whom all true
And perfect beauty did at first proceed:
He only fair, and what he fair hath made;
All other fair, like flowers, untimely fade.

Edmund Spenser (*Amoretti*, LXX)

STELLA LOOKED ON

c. 1581 (?)

Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance
Guided so well that I obtain'd the prize,
Both by the judgment of the English eyes
And of some sent from that sweet enemy France;
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance,
Town folks my strength; a daintier judge applies
His praise to slight which from good use doth rise;
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;

ensue, survive. *slight*, sleight, manual skill.

Others, because of both sides I do take
My blood from them who did excell in this,
Think Nature me a man-at-arms did make.
How far they shot awry! the true cause is,
Stella look'd on, and from her heav'nly face
Sent forth thy beams which made so fair my race.

Sir Philip Sidney (*Astrophel and Stella*, XLI)

WITH HOW SAD STEPS, O MOON

c. 1581 (?)

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What, may it be that even in heav'nly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?
Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case —
I read it in they looks; thy languish'd grace,
To me, that feel the like, thy state descries.
Then, ev'n of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deem'd there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they, above, love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

Sir Philip Sidney (*Astrophel and Stella*, XXXI)

A FAREWELL

Bef. 1585

Leave me, O Love! which reachest but to dust;
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things:
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust;
Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings.

Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke, where lasting freedoms be,
Which breaks the clouds, and opens forth the light,
That doth both shine, and give us sight to see.

O take fast hold! let that light be thy guide,
In this small course, which birth draws out to death,
And think how evil becometh him to slide,
Who seeketh heav'n, and comes of heav'nly breath.
Then farewell, World, thy uttermost I see;
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in Me!

Splendidis Longum Valedico Nugis.

Sir Philip Sidney (*Certain Sonnets*)

VOICES AT THE WINDOW

c. 1581

"Who is it that this dark night
Underneath my window plaineth?"
It is one who from thy sight
Being, ah, exiled, disdaineth
Every other vulgar wight.

"Why, alas, and are you he?
Be not yet those fancies changèd?"
Dear, when you find change in me,
Though from me you be estrangèd,
Let my change to ruin be.

"Well, in absence this will die;
Leave to see, and leave to wonder."
Absence, sure, will help, if I
Can learn how much myself to sunder
From what in my heart doth lie.

"But time will these thoughts remove;
Time doth work what no man knoweth."
Time doth as the subject prove;
With time still the affection groweth
In the faithful turtle-dove.

"What if you new beauties see,
Will not they stir new affection?"
I will think they pictures be,
(Image-like, of saints' perfection)
Poorly counterfeiting thee.

"But your reason's purest light
Bids you leave such minds to nourish."
Dear, do reason no such spite:
Never doth thy beauty flourish
More than in my reason's sight . . .

"Peace! I think that some give ear,
Come, no more, lest I get anger."
Bliss! I will my bliss forbear,
Fearing, sweet, you to endanger;
But my soul shall harbor there.

Sir Philip Sidney (from Astrophel and Stella)

A PASTORAL

c. 1591

Sweet birds! that sit and sing amid the shady valleys,
And see how sweetly Phyllis walks amid her garden alleys,
Go round about her bower, and sing as ye are bidden:
To her is only known his faith that from the world is hidden,

And she among you all that hath the sweetest voice,
Go chirp of him that never told, yet never changed, his choice.

And not forget his faith that lived for ever loved
Yet never made his fancy known, nor ever favor moved;
And ever let your ground of all your grace be this —
"To you, to you, to you the due of love and honor is,
On you, on you, on you our music all attendeth,
For as on you our Muse begun, in you all music endeth."

Nicholas Breton (?) (*from Britton's Bower of Delights*)

CARE-CHARMER SLEEP

1592

Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born:
Relieve my languish and restore the light;
With dark forgetting of my care, return,
And let the day be time enough to mourn
The shipwrack of my ill-adventured youth:
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn
Without the torment of the night's untruth.
Cease, dreams, the images of day's desires,
To model forth the passions of the morrow;
Never let rising sun approve you liars,
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow.
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain,
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

Samuel Daniel (*Sonnets to Delia,* LIV)

WHEN IN DISGRACE

c. 1595–98

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

William Shakespeare (*Sonnets*, XXIX)

SINCE BRASS, NOR STONE, NOR EARTH

c. 1595–98

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'ersways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wreckful siege of battering days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but Time decays?
O fearful meditation! where, alack,
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O, none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

William Shakespeare (*Sonnets*, LXV)

TIRED WITH ALL THESE

c. 1595–98

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,
As, to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honor shamefully misplaced,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And strength by limping sway disablèd,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill:
Tired with all these, from these I would be gone,
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

William Shakespeare (*Sonnets*, LXVI)

THAT TIME OF YEAR

c. 1595–98

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more
strong
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

William Shakespeare (*Sonnets*, LXXIII)

TRUE LOVE

c. 1595–98

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is a star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height is taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

William Shakespeare (*Sonnets*, CXVI)

SOUL AND BODY

c. 1595–98

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
[Foiled by] these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? is this thy body's end?

Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

William Shakespeare (*Sonnets*, CXLVI)

WINTER

c. 1591

When icicles hang by the wall
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail;
When blood is nipt, and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
Tuwhit, tuwhoo,
A merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all around the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw;
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
Tuwhit, tuwhoo,
A merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

William Shakespeare (*in Love's Labor's Lost*)

keel, stir, or ladle (?).

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

c. 1599

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

William Shakespeare (in As You Like It)

MAN'S INGRATITUDE

c. 1599

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then heigh-ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembred not.
Heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.
Then heigh-ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

William Shakespeare (in As You Like It)

MISTRESS MINE

c. 1599

O Mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear, your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low:
Trip no further, pretty sweeting,
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty,
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

William Shakespeare (in Twelfth Night)

CRABBED AGE AND YOUTH

c. 1599

Crabbed age and youth cannot live together:
Youth is full of pleasance, age is full of care;
Youth like summer morn, age like winter weather;

Youth like summer brave, age like winter bare.
Youth is full of sport, age's breath is short;
Youth is nimble, age is lame;
Youth is hot and bold, age is weak and cold;
Youth is wild, and age is tame.
Age, I do abhor thee; youth, I do adore thee;
O, my love, my love is young!
Age, I do defy thee: O, sweet shepherd, hie thee,
For methinks thou stay'st too long.

William Shakespeare (?) (From The Passionate Pilgrim)

DIRGE FOR LOVE

c. 1599

Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath,
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet
On my black coffin let there be strown;
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown;
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O where
Sad lover never find my grave
To weep there!

William Shakespeare (in Twelfth Night)

HOW SHOULD I YOUR TRUE LOVE KNOW?

1603

How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff
And his sandal shoon.

He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone,
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.

White his shroud as the mountain snow,
Larded with sweet flowers,
Which bewept to the grave did go
With true-love showers.

William Shakespeare (*in Hamlet*)

MURDER

1605–06

PLACE: *A Hall in Macbeth's Castle, at Inverness, Scotland.*

TIME: *At dead of night.*

Enter Lady Macbeth

Lady M. That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;
What hath quench'd them hath given me fire. Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it:
The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms

larded, garnished.

Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd their possets,
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

Macb. (*within*). Who's there? what, ho!

Lady M. Alack, I am afraid they have awaked
And 'tis not done: the attempt and not the deed
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't.

Enter Macbeth

My husband!

Macb. I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

Lady M. I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?

Macb. When?

Lady M. Now.

Macb. As I descended?

Lady M. Ay.

Macb. Hark!
Who lies i' the second chamber?

Lady M. Donalbain.

Macb. This is a sorry sight. (*Looking at his hands.*

Lady M. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

Macb. There's one did laugh in's sleep, and one cried "Murder!"
That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:
But they did say their prayers, and address'd them
Again to sleep.

Lady M. There are two lodg'd together.

Macb. One cried "God bless us!" and "Amen" the other,

As they had seen me with these hangman's hands:
Listening their fear, I could not say "Amen,"
When they did say "God bless us!"
Lady M. Consider it not so deeply.
Macb. But wherefore could I not pronounce "Amen"?
I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"
Stuck in my throat.
Lady M. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.
Macb. Methought I heard a voice cry "Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep" — the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast, —
Lady M. What do you mean?
Macb. Still it cried "Sleep no more!" to all the house:
"Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more: Macbeth shall sleep no more."
Lady M. Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.
Macb. I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on't again I dare not.
Lady M. Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead

Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt.

(*Exit. Knocking within.*

Macb. Whence is that knocking?
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?
What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine eyes!
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

Re-enter Lady Macbeth

Lady M. My hands are of your color, but I shame
To wear a heart so white. (*Knocking within.*) I hear a knocking
At the south entry: retire we to our chamber:
A little water clears us of this deed:
How easy is it then! Your constancy
Hath left you unattended. (*Knocking within.*) Hark! more knocking:
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us
And show us to be watchers: be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.

Macb. To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself. (*Knocking within.*
Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst! (*Exeunt.*

William Shakespeare (*Macbeth*, II, *ii*)

nightgown, dressing-gown.

THE DEATHS OF ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

1607–08

PLACE: *A monument near Alexandria.*
TIME: *A.D. 30.*

Enter Cleopatra, and her maids aloft, with Charmian and Iras, her attendants

Cleo. O Charmian, I will never go from hence.
Char. Be comforted, dear madam.
Cleo. No, I will not:
All strange and terrible events are welcome,
But comforts we despise; our size of sorrow,
Proportion'd to our cause, must be as great
As that which makes it.

Enter, below, Diomedes, an attendant

How now! Is he dead?
Dio. His death's upon him, but not dead.
Look out o' the other side your monument;
His guard have brought him thither.

Enter, below, Antony, borne by the Guard

Cleo. O sun,
Burn the great sphere thou movest in! darkling stand
The varying shore o' the world. O Antony,
Antony, Antony! Help, Charmian, help Iras, help;
Help, friends below; let's draw him hither.
Ant. Peace!
Not Cæsar's valor hath o'erthrown Antony,
But Antony's hath triumph'd on itself.
Cleo. So it should be, that none but Antony
Should conquer Antony; but woe 'tis so!
Ant. I am dying, Egypt, dying; only
I here importune death awhile, until

Of many thousand kisses the poor last
I lay upon your lips.
Cleo. I dare not, dear,
Dear my lord, pardon, I dare not,
Lest I be taken: not the imperious show
Of the full-fortuned Cæsar ever shall
Be brooch'd with me; if knife, drugs, serpents, have
Edge, sting, or operation, I am safe:
Your wife Octavia, with her modest eyes
And still conclusion, shall acquire no honor
Demurring upon me. But come, come, Antony, —
Help me, my women, — we must draw thee up;
Assist, good friends.
Ant. O, quick, or I am gone.
Cleo. Here's sport indeed! How heavy weighs my lord!
Our strength is all gone into heaviness;
That makes the weight. Had I great Juno's power,
The strong-wing'd Mercury should fetch thee up
And set thee by Jove's side. Yet come a little —
Wishers were ever fools — O, come, come, come;

(They heave Antony aloft to Cleopatra.

And welcome, welcome! die where thou hast lived:
Quicken with kissing: had my lips that power,
Thus would I wear them out.
Others: A heavy sight!
Ant. I am dying, Egypt, dying:
Give me some wine, and let me speak a little.
Cleo. No, let me speak, and let me rail so high,
That the false housewife Fortune break her wheel,
Provok'd by my offence.
Ant. One word, sweet queen:
Of Cæsar seek your honor, with your safety. O!

still conclusion, quiet inference.

Cleo. They do not go together.
Ant. Gentle, hear me:
None about Cæsar trust but Proculeius.
Cleo. My resolution and my hands I'll trust;
None about Cæsar.
Ant. The miserable change now at my end
Lament nor sorrow at, but please your thoughts
In feeding them with those my former fortunes
Wherein I liv'd, the greatest prince o' the world,
The noblest, and do now not basely die,
Not cowardly put off my helmet to
My countryman, a Roman by a Roman
Valiantly vanquish'd. Now my spirit is going;
I can no more.
Cleo. Noblest of men, woo't die?
Hast thou no care of me? shall I abide
In this dull world, which in thy absence is
No better than a sty? O, see, my women,
(*Antony dies.*
The crown o' the earth doth melt. My lord!
O, wither'd is the garland of the war,
The soldier's pole is fall'n: young boys and girls
Are level now with men; the odds is gone,
And there is nothing left remarkable
Beneath the visiting moon. (*Faints.*
Char. O, quietness, lady!
Iras. She's dead too, our sovereign.
Char. Lady!
Iras. Madam!
Char. O madam, madam, madam!
Iras. Royal Egypt,
Empress!
Char. Peace, peace, Iras!
Cleo. No more, but e'en a woman, and commanded
By such poor passion as the maid that milks

And does the meanest chares. It were for me
To throw my sceptre at the injurious gods,
To tell them that this world did equal theirs
Till they had stol'n our jewel. All's but naught;
Patience is sottish, and impatience does
Become a dog that's mad: then is it sin
To rush into the secret house of death,
Ere death dare come to us? How do you, women?
What, what! good cheer! Why, how now, Charmian!
My noble girls! Ah, women, women, look,
Our lamp is spent, it's out! Good sirs, take heart:
We'll bury him; and then, what's brave, what's noble,
Let's do it after the high Roman fashion,
And make death proud to take us. Come, away:
This case of that huge spirit now is cold:
Ah, women, women! Come; we have no friend
But resolution and the briefest end.

(*Exeunt: those above bearing off Antony's body.*

. . . . . .

Cleopatra and Charmian: to them Iras with a robe, crown, &c.

Cleo. Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have
Immortal longings in me: now no more
The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip:
Yare, yare, good Iras; quick. Methinks I hear
Antony call; I see him rouse himself
To praise my noble act; I hear him mock
The luck of Cæsar, which the gods give men
To excuse their after wrath. Husband, I come:
Now to that name my courage prove my title!
I am fire and air; my other elements
I give to baser life. So; have you done?
Come then and take the last warmth of my lips.

yare, quick.

Farewell, kind Charmian; Iras, long farewell.

(*Kisses them. Iras falls and dies.*

Have I the aspic in my lips? Dost fall?
If thou and nature can so gently part,
The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,
Which hurts and is desired. Dost thou lie still?
If thus thou vanishest, thou tell'st the world
It is not worth leave-taking.

Char. Dissolve, thick cloud, and rain, that I may say
The gods themselves do weep!

Cleo. This proves me base:
If she first meet the curled Antony,
He'll make demand of her, and spend that kiss
Which is my heaven to have. Come, thou mortal wretch,

(*To an asp, which she applies to her breast.*

With thy sharp teeth this knot intrinsicate
Of life at once untie: poor venemous fool,
Be angry, and dispatch. O, couldst thou speak,
That I might hear thee call great Cæsar ass
Unpolicied!

Char. O eastern star!

Cleo. Peace, peace!
Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
That sucks the nurse asleep?

Char. O, break! O, break!

Cleo. As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle, —
O Antony! — nay, I will take thee too:

(*Applying another asp to her arm.*

What should I stay — (*Dies.*

Char. In this vile world? So, fare thee well.
Now boast thee, death, in thy possession lies

mortal, deadly. *intrinsicate*, intricate.

A lass unparallel'd. Downy windows, close;
And golden Phœbus never be beheld
Of eyes again so royal! Your crown's awry;
I'll mend it, and then play.

Enter the Guard, rushing in

First Guard. Where is the queen?
Char. Speak softly, wake her not.
First G. Cæsar hath sent —
Char. Too slow a messenger.
(*Applies an asp.*
O, come apace, dispatch: I partly feel thee.
First G. Approach, ho! All's not well: Cæsar's beguiled.
Second G. There's Dolabella sent from Cæsar; call him.
First G. What work is here! Charmian, is this well done?
Char. It is well done, and fitting for a princess
Descended of so many royal kings.
Ah, soldier! (*Dies.*

William Shakespeare (*Antony and Cleopatra,* IV, XV; *and* V, ii)

HARK, HARK, THE LARK

c. 1609

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes;
With everything that pretty is,
My lady sweet, arise;
Arise, arise.

William Shakespeare (*in Cymbeline*)

DIRGE

c. 1609

Fear no more the heat o' the sun
  Nor the furious winters' rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
  Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great,
  Thou art past the tyrant's stroke:
Care no more to clothe and eat;
  To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,
  Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
  Thou hast finished joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have,
And renownèd be thy grave.

William Shakespeare (*in Cymbeline*)

consign to thee, sign the contract (with death) with thee.

A SEA DIRGE

c. 1611

Full fathom five thy father lies,
  Of his bones are coral made,
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
  Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
  Ding-dong,
Hark! now I hear them, ding-dong, bell.

William Shakespeare (in The Tempest)

AUTOLYCUS' SONG

c. 1610

Jog on, jog on, the footpath way,
  And merrily hent the stile-a:
A merry heart goes all the day
  Your sad tires in a mile-a.

William Shakespeare (in A Winter's Tale)

A CATCH

c. 1599

Cold's the wind, and wet's the rain,
  Saint Hugh be our good speed:
Ill is the weather that bringeth no gain,
  Nor helps good hearts in need.

Troll the bowl, the jolly nut-brown bowl,
  And here, kind mate, to thee!
Let's sing a dirge for Saint Hugh's soul
  And down it merrily.

hent, seize. *troll*, pass around.

Down-a-down, hey down-a-down,
Hey derry derry down-a-down!
Close with the tenor, boy;
Ho! well done, to me let come;
Ring compass, gentle joy.

Cold's the wind, and wet's the rain,
Saint Hugh be our good speed:
Ill is the weather that bringeth no gain,
Nor helps good hearts in need.

Thomas Dekker (in The Shoemaker's Holiday)

O SWEET CONTENT

c. 1599

Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?
O sweet content!
Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexed?
O punishment!
Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexed
To add to golden numbers, golden numbers?
O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!
Work apace, apace, apace, apace;
Honest labor bears a lovely face;
Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny!

Canst drink the waters of the crispëd spring?
O sweet content!
Swimm'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own tears?
O punishment!
Then he that patiently want's burden bears
No burden bears, but is a king, a king!

ring compass, "perhaps show the range of your voice by singing out." (Gummere.)

O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!
Work apace, apace, apace, apace;
Honest labor bears a lovely face;
Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny!

Thomas Dekker (in Patient Grissell)

ECHO'S DIRGE FOR NARCISSUS

c. 1600

Slow, slow, fresh fount, keep time with my salt tears;
Yet slower, yet, O faintly, gentle springs;
List to the heavy part the music bears,
Woe weeps out her division when she sings.
Droop herbs and flowers,
Fall grief in showers,
Our beauties are not ours;
O, I could still,
Like melting snow upon some craggy hill,
Drop, drop, drop, drop,
Since nature's pride is now a withered daffodil.

Ben Jonson (in Cynthia's Revels)

HYMN TO DIANA

c. 1600

Queen and Huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair,
State in wonted manner keep:
Hesperus entreats thy light,
Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose;

division, a rapid musical phrase.

Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heaven to clear when day did close:
Bless us then with wished sight,
Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart
And thy crystal-shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short soever:
Thou that mak'st a day of night,
Goddess excellently bright.

Ben Jonson (in Cynthia's Revels)

AN EPITAPH ON SALATHIEL PAVY

A CHILD OF QUEEN ELIZABETH'S CHAPEL

c. 1602

Weep with me, all you that read
This little story;
And know for whom a tear you shed
Death's self is sorry.
'Twas a child that so did thrive
In grace and feature,
As heaven and nature seemed to strive
Which owned the creature.
Years he numbered scarce thirteen
When Fates turned cruel,
Yet three filled zodiacs had he been
The stage's jewel;
And did act, what now we moan,
Old men so duly,
As, sooth, the Parcæ thought him one,
He played so truly.
So, by error to his fate
They all consented;

But viewing him since, alas too late,
They have repented;
And have sought to give new birth,
In baths to steep him;
But, being so much too good for earth,
Heaven vows to keep him.

Ben Jonson

SIMPLEX MUNDITIIS

1609–10

Still to be neat, still to be drest,
As you were going to a feast;
Still to be powdered, still perfumed:
Lady, it is to be presumed,
Though art's hid causes are not found,
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

Give me a look, give me a face,
That makes simplicity a grace;
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free:
Such sweet neglect more taketh me
Than all th' adulteries of art;
They strike my eyes, but not my heart.

Ben Jonson (in Epicœne, or The Silent Woman)

TO CELIA

1616

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not look for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;

But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honoring thee
As giving it a hope that there
It could not withered be;
But thou thereon didst only breathe
And sent'st it back to me;
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
Not of itself, but thee.

Ben Jonson

CONJURATION

1601

When thou must home to shades of underground,
And there arrived, a new admirëd guest,
The beauteous spirits do engirt thee round,
White Iope, blithe Helen, and the rest,
To hear the stories of thy finished love
From that smooth tongue whose music hell can move;

Then wilt thou speak of banqueting delights,
Of masques and revels which sweet youth did make,
Of tourneys and great challenges of knights,
And all these triumphs for thy beauty's sake:
When thou hast told these honors done to thee,
Then tell, O tell, how thou didst murder me.

Thomas Campion (in Rosseter's A Book of Airs)

CHERRY-RIPE

c. 1617

There is a garden in her face,
Where roses and white lilies grow;
A heavenly paradise is that place,
Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow;
There cherries grow that none may buy,
Till "Cherry-Ripe" themselves do cry.

Those cherries fairly do enclose
Of orient pearl a double row,
Which when her lovely laughter shows,
They look like rose-buds filled with snow:
Yet them no peer nor prince may buy,
Till "Cherry-Ripe" themselves do cry.

Her eyes like angels watch them still;
Her brows like bended bows do stand,
Threatening with piercing frowns to kill
All that attempt with eye or hand
Those sacred cherries to come nigh,
Till "Cherry-Ripe" themselves do cry.

Thomas Campion (in The Fourth Book of Airs)

LOVE OMNIPRESENT

1602

Were I as base as is the lowly plain,
And you, my love, as high as heaven above,
Yet should the thoughts of me, your humble swain,
Ascend to heaven in honor of my love.
Were I as high as heaven above the plain,
And you, my love, as humble and as low
As are the deepest bottoms of the main,

Wheresoe'er you were, with you my love should go.
Were you the earth, dear love, and I the skies,
My love should shine on you like to the sun,
And look upon you with ten thousand eyes,
Till heaven waxed blind, and till the world were done.
Wheresoe'er I am, below, or else above you,
Wheresoe'er you are, my heart shall truly love you.

Joshua Sylvester (in A Poetical Rhapsody)

LULLABY

1603

Weep you no more, sad fountains,
What need you flow so fast?
Look how the snowy mountains
Heaven's sun doth gently waste.
But my sun's heavenly eyes,
View not your weeping,
That now lies sleeping,
Softly, now softly lies
Sleeping.

Sleep is a reconciling
A rest that peace begets;
Doth not the sun rise smiling
When fair at ev'n he sets?
Rest you then, rest, sad eyes,
Melt not in weeping,
While she lies sleeping,
Softly, now softly lies
Sleeping.

John Dowland's Third and Last Book of Songs and Airs

PHYLLIDA FLOUTS ME

Bef. 1603

Oh, what a plague is love! How shall I bear it?
She will unconstant prove, I greatly fear it.
She so molests my mind, that my wit faileth.
She wavers with the wind, as the ship saileth.
Please her the best I may,
She looks the other way.
Alack and well-a-day!
Phyllida flouts me.

At the fair, yesterday, she would not see me,
But turned another way, when she came nigh me.
Dick had her in to dine; he might entreat her.
Will had her to the wine; I could not get her.
With Daniel did she dance;
At me she looked askance.
O thrice unhappy chance!
Phyllida flouts me.

I cannot work and sleep, both at all season:
Love wounds my heart so deep, without all reason.
I do consume, alas! with care and sorrow,
Even like a sort of beasts pinde in a meadow.
I shall be dead, I fear,
Within this thousand year;
And all for very care:
Phyllida flouts me.

She hath a clout of mine, wrought with good coventry,
Which she keeps for a sign of my fidelity;

pinde, penned? pined? *coventry*, blue embroidery

But, in faith, if she flinch, she shall not wear it;
To Tib, my t'other wench, I mean to bear it.
Yet it will kill my heart
So quickly to depart.
Death, kill me with thy dart!
Phyllida flouts me.

Yesternight, very late, as I was walking,
I saw one in the gate, with my Love talking.
Every word that she spoke, he gave her kissing,
Which she as kindly took as mother's blessing.
But when I come to kiss,
She very dainty is.
Oh, what a hell is this!
Phyllida flouts me.

Fair maid, be not so coy, never disdain me!
I am my mother's boy; Sweet, entertain me!
She'll give me, when she dies, all things befitting:
Her poultry and her bees, with her goose sitting,
A pair of mattress beds,
A barrel full of shreds, —
And yet, for all my goods,
Phyllida flouts me.

I saw my face, of late, in a fair fountain;
I know there's none so feat, in all the mountain.
Lasses do leave their sheep and flock above me,
And for my love do weep, and fain would have me.
Maidens in every place
Strive to behold my face;
And yet — O heavy case —
Phyllida flouts me . . .

Thou shalt eat curds and cream, all the year lasting;
And drink the crystal stream, pleasant in tasting;
Whig and whey whilst thou burst, and brambleberries,
Pie-lids and pasty-crust, pears, plums, and cherries.
Thy garments shall be thin,
Made of a wether's skin —
Yet all not worth a pin!
Phyllida flouts me.

I found a stock-dove's nest, and thou shalt have it.
The cheese-cake, in my chest, for thee I save it.
I will give thee rush-rings, key-knobs, and cushnets,
Pence, purse, and other things, bells, beads, and bracelets,
My sheep-hook, and my dog,
My bottle, and my bag —
Yet all not worth a rag!
Phyllida flouts me.

Thy glorious beauty's gleam dazzles my eyesight,
Like the sun's brightest beam shining at midnight.
O my heart! O my heels! Fie on all wenches!
Pluck up thy courage, Giles; bang him that flinches!
Back to thy sheep again,
Thou silly shepherd's swain;
Thy labor is in vain!
Phyllida flouts me.

Author unknown (*Shirburne Ballads MS.*)

whig, buttermilk. *whilst*, until. *cushnets*, little cushions.

GOOD MORROW

1605 (?)

Pack, clouds, away, and welcome day,
With night we banish sorrow;
Sweet air, blow soft, mount, lark, aloft,
To give my love good-morrow.
Wings from the wind, to please her mind,
Notes from the lark I'll borrow;
Bird, prune thy wing, nightingale, sing,
To give my love good-morrow;
To give my love good-morrow,
Notes from both I'll borrow.

Wake from thy nest, robin-redbreast,
Sing birds in every furrow;
And from each bill let music shrill
Give my fair love good-morrow.
Blackbird and thrush in every bush,
Stare, linnet, and cock-sparrow,
You pretty elves, amongst yourselves
Sing my fair love good-morrow;
To give my love good-morrow
Sing birds in every furrow.

Thomas Heywood (*in The Rape of Lucrece*)

YE LITTLE BIRDS THAT SIT AND SING

1607

Ye little birds that sit and sing
Amidst the shady valleys,
And see how Phyllis sweetly walks
Within her garden-alleys;
Go, pretty birds, about her bower;
Sing, pretty birds, she may not lower;
Ah, me! methinks I see her frown,
Ye pretty wantons, warble.

Go, tell her through your chirping bills,
As you by me are bidden,
To her is only known my love,
Which from the world is hidden.
Go, pretty birds, and tell her so;
See that your notes strain not too low,
For still, methinks, I see her frown,
Ye pretty wantons, warble.

Go, tune your voices' harmony,
And sing, I am her lover;
Strain loud and sweet, that every note
With sweet content may move her:
And she that hath the sweetest voice,
Tell her I will not change my choice;
Yet still, methinks, I see her frown,
Ye pretty wantons, warble.

Oh, fly! make haste! see, see, she falls
Into a pretty slumber;
Sing round about her rosy bed,
That waking she may wonder.
Say to her, 'tis her lover true
That sendeth love to you, to you;
And when you hear her kind reply,
Return with pleasant warblings.

Thomas Heywood (?) (*in The Fair Maid of the Exchange*)

DIRGE

c. 1607

Call for the robin-redbreast and the wren,
Since o'er shady groves they hover,
And with leaves and flowers do cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men.

Call unto his funeral dole
The ant, the field-mouse, and the mole,
To rear him hillocks that shall keep him warm,
And, when gay tombs are robbed, sustain no harm;
But keep the wolf far thence, that's foe to men,
For with his nails he'll dig them up again.

John Webster (in The White Devil)

DEATH

Bef. 1609 (?)

Death, be not proud, though some have callëd thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure, then from thee much more must flow:
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and souls' delivery.
Thou art slave to Fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well,
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou, then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more: Death thou shalt die.

John Donne

SONG

Bef. 1611 (?)

Sweetest Love, I do not go
For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can show
A fitter Love for me;

But since that I
Must die at last, 'tis best
To use myself in jest,
Thus by feign'd deaths to die.

Yesternight the sun went hence,
And yet is here to-day;
He hath no desire nor sense,
Nor half so short a way.
Then fear not me;
But believe that I shall make
Hastier journeys, since I take
More wings and spurs than he.

Oh, how feeble is man's power,
That, if good fortune fall,
Cannot add another hour,
Nor a lost hour recall.
But come bad chance,
And we join to it our strength,
And we teach it art and length,
Itself o'er us t'advance.

When thou sigh'st, thou sigh'st not wind,
But sigh'st my soul away;
When thou weep'st, unkindly kind,
My life's-blood doth decay.
It cannot be,
That thou lov'st me as thou say'st,
If in thine my life thou waste
That art the best of me.

Let not thy divining heart
Forethink me any ill;

Destiny may take thy part
And may thy fears fulfil;
But think that we
Are but turned aside to sleep:
They, who one another keep
Alive, ne'er parted be.

John Donne

ASPATIA'S SONG

c. 1609

Lay a garland on my hearse
Of the dismal yew;
Maidens, willow branches bear;
Say, I diëd true.

My love was false, but I was firm
From my hour of birth;
Upon my buried body lay
Lightly, gently, earth.

John Fletcher(?) (in The Maid's Tragedy)

A BRIDAL SONG

Bef. 1611

Roses, their sharp spines being gone,
Not royal in their smells alone,
But in their hue;
Maiden pinks, of odor faint,
Daisies smell-less, yet most quaint,
And sweet thyme true;

Primrose, first-born child of Ver,
Merry spring-time's harbinger,
With her bells dim;
Oxlips in their cradles growing,

Marigolds on deathbeds blowing,
Larks'-heels trim —

All dear Nature's children sweet,
Lie 'fore bride and bridegroom's feet,
Blessing their sense!
Not an angel of the air,
Bird melodious, or bird fair,
Be absent hence!

The crow, the slanderous cuckoo, nor
The boding raven, nor chough hoar
Nor chattering pie,
May on our bride-house perch or sing,
Or with them any discord bring,
But from it fly.

John Fletcher or William Shakespeare (in Two Noble Kinsmen)

LOVE'S IMMORTALITY

1611

Crowned with flowers I saw fair Amaryllis
By Thyrsis sit, hard by a fount of crystal;
And with her hand, more white than snow or lilies,
On sand she wrote, "My faith shall be immortal":
And suddenly a storm of wind and weather
Blew all her faith and sand away together.

William Byrd's Psalms, Songs, and Sonnets

MEMORY

c. 1613 (?)

So shuts the marigold her leaves
At the departure of the sun;

larks'-heels, nasturtiums or, possibly, larkspurs.

So from the honeysuckle sheaves
The bee goes when the day is done;
So sits the turtle when she is but one,
And so all woe, as I since she is gone.

To some few birds kind Nature hath
Made all the summer as one day:
Which once enjoy'd, cold winter's wrath
As night they sleeping pass away.
Those happy creatures are, that know not yet
The pain to be deprived or to forget.

I oft have heard men say there be
Some that with confidence profess
The helpful Art of Memory:
But could they teach Forgetfulness,
I'd learn; and try what further art could do
To make me love her and forget her too.

William Browne of Tavistock

IN OBITUM MS. X° MAIJ, 1614

May! Be thou never graced with birds that sing
Nor Flora's pride!
In thee all flowers and roses spring,
Mine only died.

William Browne of Tavistock

ON THE LIFE OF MAN

Bef. 1616

Like to the falling of a star,
Or as the flights of eagles are,
Or like the fresh spring's gaudy hue,
Or silver drops of morning dew,

Or like the wind that chafes the flood,
Or bubbles which on water stood;
Even such is man, whose borrowed light
Is straight called in and paid to-night.
The wind blows on, the bubble dies,
The spring entombed in autumn lies,
The dew's dried up, the star is shot,
The flight is past, and man forgot.

Sir Francis Beaumont

THE CONCLUSION

Bef. 1618

Even such is time, that takes in trust
  Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with earth and dust;
  Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wander'd all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days;
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My God shall raise me up, I trust.

Sir Walter Raleigh

LOVE'S PARTING

Pub. 1619

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part —
Nay, I have done, you get no more of me;
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free;
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
When his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,

When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And Innocence is closing up his eyes:
Now if thou would'st, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover!

Michael Drayton

THE CRIER

1619

Good folk, for gold or hire,
But help me to a Crier!
For my poor Heart is run astray
After two Eyes, that passed this way.
O yes! O yes! O yes!
If there be any man,
In town or country, can
Bring my Heart again,
I'll please him for his pain.
And by these marks, I will you show
That only I this Heart do owe:

It is a wounded Heart,
Wherein yet sticks the dart;
Every piece sore hurt throughout it,
Faith and Troth writ round about it;
It was a tame Heart, and a dear,
And never used to roam:
But having got this haunt, I fear
'Twill hardly stay at home.
For God's sake, walking by the way
If you my Heart do see,
Either impound it for a Stray,
Or send it back to me!

Michael Drayton

owe, own.

SWEET SUFFOLK OWL

1619

Sweet Suffolk owl, so trimly dight
With feathers, like a lady bright,
Thou sing'st alone, sitting by night,
Te whit, te whoo! Te whit, te whoo!

Thy note that forth so freely rolls,
With shrill command the mouse controls,
And sings a dirge for dying souls,
Te whit, te whoo! Te whit, te whoo!

Thomas Vautor's Songs of Divers Airs and Natures

LOVE WILL FIND OUT THE WAY

Bef. 1635

Over the mountains
  And over the waves,
Under the fountains
  And under the graves;
Under floods that are deepest,
  Which Neptune obey,
Over rocks that are steepest,
  Love will find out the way.

When there is no place
  For the glow-worm to lie,
When there is no space
  For receipt of a fly;
When the midge dares not venture
  Lest herself fast she lay,
If Love come, he will enter
  And will find out the way.

You may esteem him
  A child for his might;
Or you may deem him
  A coward for his flight;
But if she whom Love doth honour
  Be conceal'd from the day —
Set a thousand guards upon her,
  Love will find out the way.

Some think to lose him
  By having him confined;

And some do suppose him,
  Poor heart! to be blind;
But if ne'er so close ye wall him,
  Do the best that ye may,
Blind Love (if so ye call him),
  He will find out his way.

You may train the eagle
  To stoop to your fist;
Or you may inveigle
  The Phœnix of the east;
The lioness, you may move her
  To give over her prey;
But you'll ne'er stop a lover —
  He will find out the way.

If the earth it should part him,
  He would gallop it o'er;
If the seas should o'erthwart him,
  He would swim to the shore;
Should his Love become a swallow,
  Through the air to stray,
Love will lend wings to follow,
  And will find out the way.

There is no striving
  To cross his intent;
There is no contriving
  His plots to prevent;
But if once the message greet him
  That his True Love doth stay,
If Death should come to meet him,
  Love will find out the way!

Author unknown

UPON THE DEATH OF SIR ALBERT MORTON'S WIFE

Bef. 1639

He first deceased; she for a little tried
To live without him, liked it not, and died.

Sir Henry Wotton

GUESTS

Prob. bef. 1625
Printed 1888

Yet if his majesty, our sovereign lord,
  Should of his own accord
  Friendly himself invite,
And say, "I'll be your guest to-morrow night,"
How should we stir ourselves, call and command
All hands to work! "Let no man idle stand!

Set me fine Spanish tables in the hall;
  See they be fitted all;
  Let there be room to eat
And order taken that there want no meat.
See every sconce and candlestick made bright,
That without tapers they may give a light.

Look to the presence: are the carpets spread,
  The dazie o'er the head,
  The cushions in the chairs,
And all the candles lighted on the stairs?
Perfume the chambers, and in any case
Let each man give attendance in his place!"

Thus, if the king were coming would we do;
  And 'twere good reason too;

dazie, canopy.

For 'tis a duteous thing
To show all honor to an earthly king,
And after all our travail and our cost,
So he be pleased, to think no labor lost.

But at the coming of the King of Heaven
All's set at six and seven:
We wallow in our sin,
Christ can not find a chamber in the inn.
We entertain him always like a stranger,
And, as at first, still lodge him in the manger.

Christ Church MS.

THE LESSONS OF NATURE

Pub. 1623

Of this fair volume which we World do name
If we the sheets and leaves could turn with care,
Of Him who it corrects, and did it frame,
We clear might read the art and wisdom rare:
Find out His power which wildest powers doth tame,
His providence extending everywhere,
His justice which proud rebels doth not spare,
In every page, no period of the same.
But silly we, like foolish children, rest
Well pleased with colored vellum, leaves of gold,
Fair dangling ribbands, leaving what is best,
On the great Writer's sense ne'er taking hold;
Or if by chance we stay our minds on aught,
It is some picture on the margin wrought.

William Drummond of Hawthornden

SAINT JOHN BAPTIST

1623

The last and greatest herald of Heaven's King,
Girt with rough skins, hies to the deserts wild.

Among the savage brood the woods forth bring,
Which he more harmless found than man, and mild.
His food was locusts, and what there doth spring,
With honey that from virgin hives distill'd;
Parch'd body, hollow eyes, some uncouth thing
Made him appear, long since from earth exil'd.
There burst he forth: "All ye whose hopes rely
On God, with me amidst these deserts mourn;
Repent, repent, and from old errors turn!"
Who listen'd to his voice, obey'd his cry?
Only the echoes, which he made relent,
Rung from their flinty caves, *Repent! Repent!*

William Drummond of Hawthornden

CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING

Bef. 1629

Get up, get up for shame, the blooming morn
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.
See how Aurora throws her fair
Fresh-quilted colors through the air!
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see
The dew bespangling herb and tree.
Each flower has wept, and bowed toward the east,
Above an hour since; yet you not drest,
Nay! not so much as out of bed?
When all the birds have matins said,
And sung their thankful hymns; 'tis sin,
Nay, profanation to keep in,
Whenas a thousand virgins on this day
Spring, sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.

Rise, and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh and green

And sweet as Flora. Take no care
For jewels for your gown and hair;
Fear not, the leaves will strew
Gems in abundance upon you;
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept;
Come, and receive them while the light
Hangs on the dew-locks of the night,
And Titan on the eastern hill
Retires himself, or else stands still
Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief in praying:
Few beads are best, when once we go a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and coming mark
How each field turns a street, each street a park
Made green, and trimmed with trees; see how
Devotion gives each house a bough
Or branch; each porch, each door, ere this
An ark, a tabernacle is,
Made up of white-thorn neatly interwove,
As if here were those cooler shades of love.
Can such delights be in the street
And open fields, and we not see't?
Come, we'll abroad, and let's obey
The proclamation made for May,
And sin no more, as we have done, by staying;
But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl, this day,
But is got up and gone to bring in May.
A deal of youth, ere this, is come
Back, and with white-thorn laden home.
Some have dispatched their cakes and cream,
Before that we have left to dream;

And some have wept, and woo'd, and plighted troth,
And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth.
Many a green-gown has been given;
Many a kiss, both odd and even;
Many a glance too has been sent
From out the eye, love's firmament;
Many a jest told of the key's betraying
This night, and locks picked, yet w'are not a-Maying.

Come, let us go, while we are in our prime,
And take the harmless folly of the time.
We shall grow old apace and die
Before we know our liberty.
Our life is short, and our days run
As fast away as does the sun,
And as a vapor, or a drop of rain,
Once lost can ne'er be found again;
So when or you or I are made
A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
All love, all liking, all delight,
Lies drown'd with us in endless night.
Then while time serves, and we are but decaying;
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

Robert Herrick

TO VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME

1629–40

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
  The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
  And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
  When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
  Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
  And while ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
  You may forever tarry.

Robert Herrick

NIGHT PIECE, TO JULIA

Bef. 1629

Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee,
The shooting stars attend thee,
  And the elves also,
  Whose little eyes glow
Like sparks of fire, befriend thee.

No will-o'-th'-wisp mislight thee;
Nor snake or slow-worm bite thee;
  But on, on thy way,
  Not making a stay,
Since ghost there's none to affright thee.

Let not the dark thee cumber;
What though the moon does slumber;
  The stars of the night
  Will lend thee their light,
Like tapers clear without number.

Then, Julia, let me woo thee,
Thus, thus to come unto me:
And when I shall meet
Thy silv'ry feet,
My soul I'll pour into thee.

Robert Herrick

TO MEADOWS

1629–40

Ye have been fresh and green,
Ye have been filled with flowers:
And ye the walks have been
Where maids have spent their hours.

You have beheld how they
With wicker arks did come,
To kiss and bear away
The richer cowslips home.

Y'ave heard them sweetly sing,
And seen them in a round;
Each virgin, like a spring,
With honeysuckles crowned.

But now, we see none here,
Whose silv'ry feet did tread,
And with dishevelled hair
Adorned this smoother mead.

Like unthrifts, having spent
Your stock, and needy grown,
Y'are left here to lament
Your poor estates, alone.

Robert Herrick

TO DAFFODILS

1629–40

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
  You haste away so soon;
As yet the early rising sun
  Has not attained his noon.
    Stay, stay,
  Until the hasting day
      Has run
  But to the even-song;
And, having prayed together, we
    Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you
  We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay
  As you, or any thing.
    We die,
  As your hours do, and dry
      Away,
  Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
    Ne'er to be found again.

Robert Herrick

TO BLOSSOMS

1628–40

Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,
  Why do ye fall so fast?
  Your date is not so past
But you may stay yet here a while,
  To blush and gently smile,
    And go at last.

What, were ye born to be
An hour or half's delight
And so to bid good-night?
'Twas pity Nature brought ye forth,
Merely to show your worth,
And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
May read how soon things have
Their end, though ne'er so brave;
And after they have shown their pride
Like you awhile, they glide
Into the grave.

Robert Herrick

TWO EPITAPHS ON A CHILD THAT DIED

1628–40

Here she lies, a pretty bud,
Lately made of flesh and blood:
Who as soon fell fast asleep
As her little eyes did peep.
Give her strewings, but not stir
The earth that lightly covers her.

Here a pretty baby lies
Sung to sleep with lullabies:
Pray be silent and not stir
Th'easy earth that covers her.

Robert Herrick

AN ODE FOR BEN JONSON

Ab. 1640

Ah, Ben!
Say how, or when

Shall we thy guests
Meet at those lyric feasts,
Made at the Sun,
The Dog, the Triple Tun?
Where we such clusters had,
As made us nobly wild, not mad;
And yet each verse of thine
Out-did the meat, out-did the frolic wine.

My Ben!
Or come again:
Or send to us,
Thy wit's great over-plus;
But teach us yet
Wisely to husband it;
Lest we that talent spend:
And having once brought to an end
That precious stock, the store
Of such a wit the world should have no more.

Robert Herrick

A PSALM OF PRAISE

1604–11

O Lord, our Lord,
How excellent is thy name in all the earth;
Who hast set thy glory above the heavens!

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings
Hast thou ordained strength, because of thine adversaries,
That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers
The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,
And hast crowned him with glory and honor.
Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet:
All sheep and oxen,
Yea, and the beasts of the field;
The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,
And whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Lord,
How excellent is thy name in all the earth!

Psalm, 8

THE SEARCHER OF HEARTS

1604–11

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.
Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,
Thou understandest my thoughts afar off.
Thou searchest out my path and my lying down,
And art acquainted with all my ways.
For there is not a word in my tongue,
But lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.
Thou hast beset me behind and before,
And laid thine hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
It is high, I cannot attain unto it.
Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me.
If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me,
Even the night shall be light about me;
Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee;
But the night shineth as the day:
The darkness and the light are both alike to thee.
For thou hast possessed my reins:
Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.
I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made:
Marvellous are thy works;
And that my soul knoweth right well.

Psalm, 139, 1–14

AN ANTIPHONAL

SUNG BY THE BEARERS OF THE ARK

1604–11

I. *Approaching Zion*

(*Bearers*): The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.
For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.
Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?
Or who shall stand in his holy place?

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,

Nor sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
This is the generation of them that seek him,
That seek thy face, O God of Jacob.

II. *Before the City*

(*Bearers*): Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of Glory shall come in.
(*Wardens*): Who is this King of Glory?
(*Bearers*): The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle.
(*Bearers*): Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of Glory shall come in.
(*Wardens*): Who is this King of Glory?
(*Bearers*): The Lord of Hosts,
He is the King of Glory.

Psalm, 24

A LAMENT IN EXILE

1604-11

i

By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.
We hanged our harps upon the willows
In the midst thereof.

For there they that carried us away captive
Required of us a song;
And they that wasted us
Required of us mirth:

"Sing us one of the songs of Zion."
How shall we sing the Lord's song
In a strange land?

ii

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget its cunning;
If I do not remember thee,
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth:
If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem,
Who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.
O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed,
Happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us;
Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

Psalm, 137

THE VOICE OF GOD OUT OF THE WHIRLWIND

1604–11

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?
— Declare, if thou hast understanding. —
Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest?
Or who hath stretched the line upon it?
Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened,
Or who laid the corner stone thereof,
When the morning stars sang together
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Or who shut up the sea with doors,
When it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb;
When I made the cloud the garment thereof,
And thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,
And established my decree upon it,
And set bars and doors,
And said, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further;
And here shall thy proud waves be stayed?"
. . . . . .
Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea,
Or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?
Have the gates of death been opened unto thee,
Or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?
Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth?
— Declare, if thou knowest it all. —
Where is the way where light dwelleth,
And as for darkness, where is the place thereof,
That thou shouldest take it at the bound thereof
And that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?
— Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born,
Or because the number of thy days is great?
Hast thou entered into the treasuries of the snow,
Or hast thou seen the treasuries of the hail,
Which I have reserved against the time of trouble,
Against the day of battle and war?
By what way is the light parted,
Which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?
Who hath divided a water-course for the outpouring of waters,
Or a way for the lightning of the thunder;
To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is;
On the wilderness, wherein there is no man;

To satisfy the desolate and waste ground;
And to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?
Hath the rain a father?
Or who hath begotten the drops of dew?
Out of whose womb came the ice?
And the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?
The waters are hid as with a stone,
And the face of the deep is frozen.
Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades,
Or loose the bands of Orion?
Canst thou bring forth the Twelve Signs in their season,
Or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?
Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven,
Canst thou set the dominion therof in the earth?

. . . . . .

Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lioness?
Or fill the appetite of the young lions,
When they couch in their dens,
And abide in the covert to lie in wait?
Who provideth for the raven his food,
When his young ones cry unto God,
And they wander for lack of meat?
Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth?
Or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?
Canst thou number the months that they fulfill?
Or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?
They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones,
They cast out their sorrows.
Their young ones are in good liking,
They grow up with corn,
They go forth and return not unto them.

Who hath sent out the wild ass free?
Or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?
Whose house I have made the wilderness,
And the salt places his dwellings;
He scorneth the multitude of the city,
Neither regardeth he the crying of the driver.

. . . . . .

Hast thou given the horse his strength?
Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?
Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper?
The glory of his nostrils is terrible.
He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength:
He goeth on to meet the armed men.
He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted;
Neither turneth he back from the sword.
The quiver rattleth against him,
The glittering spear and the shield.
He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage;
Neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.
He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha!
And he smelleth the battle afar off,
The thunder of the captains, and the shouting.
Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom,
And stretch her wings toward the south?
Doth the eagle mount up at thy command,
And make her nest on high?
She dwelleth and abideth on the rock,
Upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.
From thence she seeketh the prey,
And her eyes behold afar off.
Her young ones also suck up blood:
And where the slain are, there is she.

. . . . . .

Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct
Him?
He that reproveth God, let him answer it.

(A lull in the storm

Job

Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee?
I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

The Book of Job, 38–40

A LOVE IDYL

1604–11

The Loved One

I am the rose of Sharon,
And the lily of the valleys.

The Lover

As a lily among thorns,
So is my love among the daughters.

The Loved One

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,
So is my beloved among the sons.

I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
And his fruit was sweet to my taste.
He brought me to the banqueting-house,
And his banner over me was love.

Stay me with raisins, comfort me with apples:
For I am sick of love.
His left hand is under my head,
And his right hand doth embrace me.

Refrain

I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
By the roes, and by the hinds of the field,
That ye stir not up, nor awake my love,
Till he please.

The Loved One

The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh
Leaping upon the mountains,
Skipping upon the hills.
My beloved is like a roe or a young hart:
Behold, he standeth behind our wall
He looketh in at the windows,
Shewing himself through the lattice.
My beloved spake, and said unto me:
"Rise up, my love, my fair one,
And come away.

"For lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of singing birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
The fig tree ripeneth her green figs,
And the vines with the tender grape
Give a good smell.
Arise, my love, my fair one,
And come away.

"O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock,
In the secret places of the cliff,
Let me see thy countenance,
Let me hear thy voice;

For sweet is thy voice,
And thy countenance is comely."

. . . . . .

Refrain

My beloved is mine, and I am his:
He feedeth among the lilies.
Until the day break, and the shadows flee away,
Turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart
Upon the mountains of separation.

The Loved One (recounting a dream)

By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth:
I sought him, but I found him not.
I said, I will arise now, and go about the city
In the streets, and in the broad ways
I will seek him whom my soul loveth:
I sought him, but I found him not.

The watchmen that go about the city found me:
To whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?
It was but a little that I passed from them,
But I found him whom my soul loveth:
I held him, and would not let him go,
Until I had brought him into my mother's house,
And into the chamber of her that conceived me.

Refrain

I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
By the roes and by the hinds of the field,
That ye stir not up, nor awake my love,
Until he please.

LOVE

1604–11

Set me as a seal upon thine heart,
As a seal upon thine arm:
For love is strong as death;
Jealousy is cruel as the grave:
The coals thereof are coals of fire,
Which hath a most vehement flame.

Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it:
If a man would give all the substance of his
house for love,
It would utterly be contemned.

The Song of Songs, 8

REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR

1604–11

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth:

While the evil days come not,
And the years draw nigh,
When thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them:

While the sun,
Or the light,
Or the moon,
Or the stars,
Be not darkened,
Nor the clouds return after the rain:

In the day when the keepers of the house shall
tremble,
And the strong men shall bow themselves,

And the grinders cease because they are few,
And those that look out of the windows be darkened,
And the doors shall be shut in the streets;
When the sound of the grinding is low,
And one shall rise up at the voice of a bird,
And all the daughters of music shall be brought low;

Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high,
And fears shall be in the way;

And the almond tree shall blossom,
And the grasshopper shall be a burden,
And desire shall fail:

Because man goeth to his long home,
And the mourners go about the streets:

Or ever the silver cord be loosed,
Or the golden bowl be broken,
Or the pitcher be broken at the fountain,
Or the wheel broken at the cistern:

Then shall the dust return to the earth,
As it was;
And the spirit return to God
Who gave it.

Ecclesiastes, 12

HYMN ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

1629

It was the winter wild,
While the heaven-born child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;

Nature, in awe to him,
Had doffed her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour.

Only with speeches fair
She woos the gentle air
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow,
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

But he, her fears to cease,
Sends down the meek-eyed Peace;
She, crowned with olive green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing;
And waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.

No war, or battle's sound,
Was heard the world around;
The idle spear and shield were high uphung;
The hooked chariot stood
Unstained with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

But peaceful was the night
Wherein the Prince of Light
His reign of peace upon the earth began:
The winds, with wonder whist,
Smoothly the waters kissed,
Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave.

The stars, with deep amaze,
Stand fixed in steadfast gaze,
Bending one way their precious influence,
And will not take their flight,
For all the morning light,
Or Lucifer that often warned them thence;
But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until their Lord himself bespake and bid them go.

And though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,
The sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As his inferior flame
The new-enlightened world no more should need:
He saw a greater Sun appear
Than his bright throne or burning axletree could bear.

The shepherds on the lawn,
Or ere the point of dawn,
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row;
Full little thought they than,
That the mighty Pan
Was kindly come to live with them below:

Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet
As never was by mortal finger strook,
Divinely-warbled voice
Answering the stringed noise,
As all their souls in blissful rapture took:
The air, such pleasure loath to lose,
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close.

Nature that heard such sound
Beneath the hollow round
Of Cynthia's seat the airy region thrilling,
Now was almost won
To think her part was done,
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling:
She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all heaven and earth in happier union.

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light,
That with long beams the shamefaced night arrayed;
The helmed cherubim
And sworded seraphim
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed,
Harping in loud and solemn quire,
With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-born heir.

unexpressive, inexpressible.

Such music (as 'tis said)
Before was never made,
  But when of old the sons of morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,
  And the well-balanced world on hinges hung,
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channels keep.

Ring out, ye crystal spheres!
Once bless our human ears
  (If ye have power to touch our senses so),
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time;
  And let the bass of heaven's deep organ blow;
And with your ninefold harmony
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

For if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,
  Time will run back and fetch the age of gold;
And speckled Vanity
Will sicken soon and die,
  And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould;
And Hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
  Orbed in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,
  With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering;

And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high Palace Hall.

But wisest Fate says no,
This must not yet be so;
The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss,
So both himself and us to glorify:
Yet first, to those ychained in sleep,
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep,

With such a horrid clang
As on Mount Sinai rang,
While the red fire and smouldering clouds outbrake:
The aged earth, aghast
With terror of that blast,
Shall from the surface to the centre shake,
When at the world's last session,
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his throne.

And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect is,
But now begins; for from this happy day
The old Dragon under ground,
In straiter limits bound,
Not half so far casts his usurped sway;
And wroth to see his kingdom fail,
Swinges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

The oracles are dumb;
No voice or hideous hum

Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathed spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament;
From haunted spring, and dale
Edged with poplar pale,
The parting Genius is with sighing sent;
With flower-inwoven tresses torn,
The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint;
In urns and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the flamens at their service quaint;
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar power forgoes his wonted seat.

Peor and Baalim
Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice-battered god of Palestine;
And mooned Ashtaroth,
Heaven's queen and mother both,
Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine;

The Lybic Hammon shrinks his horn;
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz mourn.

And sullen Moloch, fled,
Hath left in shadows dread
His burning idol all of blackest hue;
In vain with cymbals' ring
They call the grisly king,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue;
The brutish gods of Nile, as fast,
Isis and Orus and the dog Anubis, haste.

Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,
Trampling the unshowered grass with lowings loud;
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest;
Naught but profoundest Hell can be his shroud;
In vain, with timbrelled anthems dark,
The sable-stoled sorcerers bear his worshipped ark.

He feels from Juda's land
The dreaded infant's hand;
The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn;
Nor all the gods beside
Longer dare abide,
Not Typhon huge ending in snaky twine:
Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damned crew.

So when the sun in bed,
Curtained with cloudy red,

Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to the infernal jail,
Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave,
And the yellow-skirted fays
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze.

But see! the Virgin blest
Hath laid her Babe to rest.
Time is our tedious song should here have ending:
Heaven's youngest-teemed star
Hath fixed her polished car,
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending;
And all about the courtly stable
Bright-harnessed angels sit in order serviceable.

John Milton

L'ALLEGRO

1629–31

Hence, loathèd Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born
In Stygian cave forlorn,
'Mongst horrid shapes and shrieks and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings;
There under ebon shades and low-browed rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclept Euphrosyne,

And by men heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces more,
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore;
Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,
There on beds of violets blue
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreathèd smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it as you go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty;
And if I give thee honor due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreprovèd pleasures free:
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-briar or the vine,

Or the twisted eglantine;
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerily rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate
Where the great sun begins his state,
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures
Whilst the landskip round it measures:
Russet lawns and fallows grey,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The laboring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighboring eyes.
Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two agèd oaks,

Where Corydon and Thyrsis met
Are at their savory dinner set
Of herbs and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
And then in haste her bowers she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tanned haycock in the mead.
Sometimes, with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the chequered shade;
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How faery Mab the junkets eat.
She was pinched and pulled, she said;
And he, by friar's lantern led,
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-laborers could not end;
Then lies him down, the lubber fiend,
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
Towered cities please us then,

And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp and feast and revelry,
With mask and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learnèd sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.
And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes with many a winding bout
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out,
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice.
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

John Milton

IL PENSEROSO

1629–31

Hence, vain deluding Joys,
  The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,
  Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
  And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
  As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
  The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.
But hail, thou Goddess sage and holy,
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starred Ethiop queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The sea nymphs', and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she (in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain).
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,

All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come, but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace, and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
And add to these retirèd Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;
But first, and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
The cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er the accustomed oak.
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among,
I woo, to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon

Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar:
Or if the air will not permit,
Some still removèd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm.
Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear
With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
And of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent,
With planet or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptered pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.

But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what love did seek;
Or call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold.
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass,
On which the Tartar king did ride;
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of tourneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchieft in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud;
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops from off the eaves.
And when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,

Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There in close covert by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee, with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep;
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid;
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced quire below
In service high and anthems clear
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew,

Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

John Milton

LYCIDAS

In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637; and by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.

1637

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.
Begin then, Sisters of the sacred well
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse;
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favor my destined urn,
And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud.

For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose at evening, bright,
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,
Tempered to the oaten flute;
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long;
And old Damœtas loved to hear our song.

But oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone, and never must return!
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows and the hazel copses green
Shall now no more be seen,
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to Shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream.

Ay me, I fondly dream!
Had ye been there — for what could that have done?
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When by the rout that made the hideous roar
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorrèd shears,
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears:
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies;
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."
O fountain Arethuse, and thou honored flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood:
But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the herald of the sea,
That came in Neptune's plea.

He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?
And questioned every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beakèd promontory:
They know not of his story;
And sage Hippotades their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed;
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.
"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"
Last came, and last did go,
The pilot of the Galilean lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake:
"How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast
And shove away the worthy bidden guest;
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs —
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;

The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."
  Return, Alpheus; the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades and wanton winds and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffodillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise:
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,

Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
Where the great vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth;
And O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor;
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals grey;
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropped into the western bay.
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.

John Milton

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED TO THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

1631

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
That I to manhood am arrived so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of heaven:
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye.

John Milton

ON HIS BLINDNESS

1652–55

When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged in me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,

And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

John Milton

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT

1655

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all th' Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

John Milton

ON HIS DECEASED WIFE

1657–58

Methought I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from Death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom washed from spot of child-bed taint,
Purification in the Old Law did save,
And such as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.

Her face was veiled; yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear as in no face with more delight.
But, O! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

John Milton

SATAN

c. 1658

Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile
Stird up with Envy and Revenge, deceiv'd
The Mother of Mankinde, what time his Pride
Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his Host
Of Rebel Angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in Glory above his Peers,
He trusted to have equal'd the most High,
If he oppos'd; and with ambitious aim
Against the Throne and Monarchy of God
Rais'd impious War in Heav'n and Battel proud
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurld headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Skie
With hideous ruine and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire,
Who durst defie th' Omnipotent to Arms.
Nine times the Space that measures Day and Night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquisht, rowling in the fiery Gulfe
Confounded though immortal: But his doom
Reserv'd him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes
That witness'd huge affliction and dismay

Satan: In this selection, Milton's own spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are followed.

Mix'd with obdurate pride and stedfast hate:
At once as far as Angels kenn he views
The dismal Situation waste and wilde,
A Dungeon horrible, on all sides round
As one great Furnace flam'd, yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Serv'd only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery Deluge, fed
With ever-burning Sulphur unconsum'd:
Such place Eternal Justice had prepar'd
For those rebellious, here their Prison ordain'd
In utter darkness, and their portion set
As far remov'd from God and light of Heav'n
As from the Center thrice to th' utmost Pole.
O how unlike the place from whence they fell!

John Milton. Paradise Lost, Book I

VIRTUE

1630-33

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky;
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night;
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye;
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie;

My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives;
But, though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

George Herbert

THE PULLEY

c. 1630

When God at first made Man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by —
Let us (said He) pour on him all we can;
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way,
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honor, pleasure:
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all His treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

For if I should (said He)
Bestow this jewel also on My creature,
He would adore My gifts instead of Me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature:
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to My breast.

George Herbert

LOVE

c. 1630

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lacked anything.

"A guest," I answer'd, "worthy to be here":
Love said, "You shall be he."
"I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on Thee."
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
"Who made the eyes but I?"

"Truth, Lord; but I have marr'd them: let my shame
Go where it doth deserve."
"And know you not," says Love, "Who bore the blame?"
"My dear, then I will serve."
"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste my meat."
So I did sit and eat.

George Herbert

THE UNFADING BEAUTY

1630–38

He that loves a rosy cheek,
Or a coral lip admires,
Or from star-like eyes doth seek
Fuel to maintain his fires:
As old Time makes these decay,
So his flames must waste away.

But a smooth and steadfast mind,
Gentle thoughts and calm desires,
Hearts with equal love combined,
Kindle never-dying fires.
Where these are not, I despise
Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes. . . .

Thomas Carew

INGRATEFUL BEAUTY THREATENED

1630–38

Know, Celia, since thou art so proud,
'Twas I that gave thee thy renown.
Thou hadst in the forgotten crowd
Of common beauties lived unknown,
Had not my verse extoll'd thy name,
And with it imp'd the wings of Fame.

That killing power is none of thine;
I gave it to thy voice and eyes;
Thy sweets, thy graces, all are mine;
Thou art my star, shin'st in my skies;
Then dart not from thy borrow'd sphere
Lightning on him that fix'd thee there.

Tempt me with such affrights no more,
Lest what I made I uncreate;
Let fools thy mystic form adore,
I know thee in thy mortal state.
Wise poets, that wrapt Truth in tales,
Knew her themselves through all her vails.

Thomas Carew

imp'd, grafted with new feathers.

ADVICE TO A LOVER

c. 1637

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prithee why so pale?
Will, when looking well can't move her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prithee why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
Prithee why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
Saying nothing do't?
Prithee why so mute?

Quit, quit, for shame! this will not move,
This cannot take her;
If of herself she will not love,
Nothing can make her:
The devil take her!

Sir John Suckling (in Aglaura, a play)

CONSTANCY

Bef. 1642

Out upon it, I have loved
Three whole days together;
And am like to love three more,
If it prove fair weather.

Time shall moult away his wings,
Ere he shall discover
In the whole wide world again
Such a constant lover.

But the spite on't is, no praise
  Is due at all to me:
Love with me had made no stays,
  Had it any been but she.

Had it any been but she,
  And that very face,
There had been at least ere this
  A dozen dozen in her place.

Sir John Suckling

DEATH THE LEVELLER

c. 1640

The glories of our blood and state
  Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armor against fate;
  Death lays his icy hand on kings:
    Sceptre and crown
    Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
  And plant fresh laurels where they kill;
But their strong nerves at last must yield,
  They tame but one another still:
    Early or late
    They stoop to fate
And must give up their murmuring breath
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow,
  Then boast no more your mighty deeds;

Upon Death's purple altar now
See where the victor-victim bleeds:
Your heads must come
To the cold tomb;
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in their dust.

James Shirley (in The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses)

TO CHLOE

WHO FOR HIS SAKE WISHED HERSELF YOUNGER

Bef. 1641

O Chloe, why wish you that your years
Would backwards run till they meet mine,
That perfect likeness, which endears
Things unto things, might us combine?
Our ages so in date agree
That twins do differ more than we.

There are two births, the one when light
First strikes the new awaken'd sense;
The other when two souls unite;
And we must count our life from thence:
When you loved me and I loved you,
Then both of us were born anew.

Love then to us new souls did give,
And in those souls did plant new powers;
Since when another life we live,
The breath we breathe is his, not ours;
Love makes those young whom age doth chill,
And whom he finds young, keeps young still.

Love, like that angel that shall call
Our bodies from the silent grave,

Unto one age doth raise us all, —
None too much, none too little have;
Nay, that the difference may be none,
He makes two not alike, but one. . . .

William Cartwright

THE WISH

1647

Well then, I now do plainly see
This busy world and I shall ne'er agree;
The very honey of all earthly joy
Does, of all meats, the soonest cloy;
And they, methinks, deserve my pity
Who for it can endure the stings,
The crowd, the buzz, and murmurings
Of this great hive, the city!

Ah, yet, ere I descend to the grave,
May I a small house and large garden have;
And a few friends, and many books, both true,
Both wise, and both delightful too!
And since Love ne'er will from me flee, —
A mistress moderately fair,
And good as guardian-angels are,
Only beloved, and loving me!

O fountains! when in you shall I
My self eased of unpeaceful thoughts espy?
O fields! O woods! when, when shall I be made
The happy tenant of your shade?
Here's the spring-head of pleasure's flood!
Here's wealthy Nature's treasury,
Where all the riches lie, that she
Has coined and stamped for good.

Pride and ambition here
Only in far-fetched metaphors appear;
Here naught but winds can hurtful murmurs scatter,
And naught but echo flatter.
The gods when they descended hither
From heaven did always choose their way;
And therefore we may boldly say
That 'tis the way too thither.

How happy here should I
And one dear She live, and embracing die!
She who is all the world, and can exclude
In deserts solitude.
I should have then this only fear:
Lest men, when they my pleasures see,
Should hither throng to live like me,
And so make a city here.

Abraham Cowley

TO LUCASTA, ON GOING TO THE WARS

Bef. 1648

Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As you too shall adore:
I could not love thee, dear, so much
Lov'd I not honor more.

Richard Lovelace

From TO ALTHEA FROM PRISON

Bef. 1648

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.

Richard Lovelace

THE RETREAT

1650

Happy those early days, when I
Shined in my angel-infancy!
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,
Or taught my soul to fancy aught
But a white celestial thought:
When yet I had not walk'd above
A mile or two from my first Love,
And looking back — at that short space —
Could see a glimpse of His bright face:
When on some gilded cloud, or flow'r,
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity:
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense
A several sin to ev'ry sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.

O how I long to travel back,
And tread again that ancient track!
That I might once more reach that plain
Where first I left my glorious train;
From whence th' enlightened spirit sees
That shady City of Palm-trees.
But ah! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way!
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move;
And when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.

Henry Vaughan

From THE WORLD

1650

I saw Eternity the other night
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm, as it was bright;
And round beneath it, Time in hours, days, years,
Driv'n by the spheres,
Like a vast shadow moved, in which the world
And all her train were hurled.

Henry Vaughan

TO HIS COY MISTRESS

Bef. 1651

Had we but world enough and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down and think which way
To walk and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood;

And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long preserved virginity;
And your quaint honor turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust:
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapt power.

chapt, jawed.

Let us roll all our strength, and all
Our sweetness up into one ball;
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Thorough the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Andrew Marvell

From THOUGHTS IN A GARDEN

Bef. 1651

What wondrous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;
The nectarine and curious peach
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness;
The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds, and other seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide;

from pleasure less, i.e. from pleasure, which is less than happiness.

There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and combs its silver wings,
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

Andrew Marvell

OLD AGE

1686 (?)

The seas are quiet when the winds give o'er:
So, calm are we, when passions are no more:
For, then we know how vain it was to boast
Of fleeting things, so certain to be lost.
Clouds of affection, from our younger eyes
Conceal that emptiness, which age descries.
The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
Lets in new light, thro' chinks that time has made:
Stronger by weakness, wiser, men become,
As they draw near to their eternal home.
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new.

Edmund Waller

A SONG FOR SAINT CECILIA'S DAY, 1687

From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
When nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
"Arise, ye more than dead!"
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey.

From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
His listening brethren stood around,
And, wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound:
Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger,
And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'Tis too late to retreat!

The soft complaining flute,
In dying notes, discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers
Whose dirge is whisper'd by the warbling lute.
Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion,
For the fair, disdainful dame.

But O, what art can teach,
What human voice can reach,
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And trees unrooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre;
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appear'd,
Mistaking Earth for Heaven.

Grand Chorus

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the Blest above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky!

John Dryden

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY — 1700–1798

TO A CHILD OF QUALITY

FIVE YEARS OLD, MDCCIV, THE AUTHOR THEN BEING FORTY

1704

Lords, knights, and squires, the numerous band,
That wear the fair Miss Mary's fetters,
Were summoned by her high command,
To show their passions by their letters.

My pen among the rest I took,
Lest those bright eyes that cannot read
Should dart their kindling fires, and look
The power they have to be obeyed.

Not quality, nor reputation,
Forbid me yet my flame to tell,
Dear Five-Years-Old befriends my passion,
And I may write till she can spell.

For, while she makes her silkworms beds
With all the tender things I swear;
Whilst all the house my passion reads,
In papers round her baby's hair;

She may receive and own my flame,
For, though the strictest prudes should know it,
She'll pass for a most virtuous dame,
And I for an unhappy poet.

Then too, alas! when she shall tear
The lines some younger rival sends;

She'll give me leave to write, I fear,
And we shall still continue friends.

For, as our different ages move,
'Tis so ordained (would Fate but mend it!)
That I shall be past making love,
When she begins to comprehend it.

Matthew Prior

EASE IN WRITING

c. 1709

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.
'Tis not enough no harshness gives offense;
The sound must seem an echo to the sense:
Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows:
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar:
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labors, and the words move slow;
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main.

Alexander Pope (from The Essay on Criticism)

EPISTLE TO MRS. BLOUNT, WITH THE WORKS OF VOITURE

1712

In these gay thoughts the Loves and Graces shine,
And all the writer lives in ev'ry line;
His easy Art may happy Nature seem,
Trifles themselves are elegant to him.

Voiture, a 17th century French poet and letter-writer, distinguished by lightness and polish, and member of the Hotel de Rambouillet.

Sure to charm all was his peculiar fate,
Who without flatt'ry pleas'd the Fair and Great;
Still with esteem no less convers'd than read,
With wit well-natured, and with books well-bred:
His heart his mistress and his friend did share,
His time the Muse, the witty, and the fair.
Thus wisely careless, innocently gay,
Cheerful he play'd the trifle, Life, away;
Till Fate scarce felt his gentle breath supprest,
As smiling infants sport themselves to rest.
Ev'n rival Wits did Voiture's death deplore,
And the gay mourn'd who never mourn'd before;
The truest hearts for Voiture heav'd with sighs,
Voiture was wept by all the brightest eyes:
The Smiles and Loves had died in Voiture's death,
But that for ever in his lines they breathe.

Let the strict life of graver mortals be
A long, exact, and serious Comedy;
In ev'ry scene some Moral let it teach,
And, if it can, at once both please and preach.
Let mine an innocent gay farce appear,
And more diverting still than regular,
Have Humor, Wit, a native Ease, and Grace,
Tho' not too strictly bound to Time and Place:
Critics in Wit, or Life, are hard to please,
Few write to those, and none can live to these.

Too much your Sex is by their forms confin'd,
Severe to all, but most to Womankind;
Custom, grown blind with Age, must be your guide;
Your pleasure is a vice, but not your pride;
By Nature yielding, stubborn but for fame,
Made slaves by honor, and made fools by shame;
Marriage may all those petty tyrants chase;
But sets up one, a greater, in their place;
Well might you wish for change by those accurst,

But the last tyrant ever proves the worst.
Still in constraint your suff'ring Sex remains,
Or bound in formal, or in real chains:
Whole years neglected, for some months ador'd,
The fawning Servant turns a haughty Lord.
Ah, quit not the free innocence of life,
For the dull glory of a virtuous Wife;
Nor let false shows, or empty titles please;
Aim not at Joy, but rest content with Ease.
The Gods, to curse Pamela with her pray'rs,
Gave the gilt coach and dappled Flanders mares,
The shining robes, rich jewels, beds of state,
And, to complete her bliss, a fool for mate.
She glares in Balls, front Boxes, and the Ring,
A vain, unquiet, glitt'ring, wretched thing!
Pride, Pomp, and State but reach her outward part;
She sighs, and is no Duchess at her heart.
But, Madam, if the fates withstand, and you
Are destin'd Hymen's willing victim too;
Trust not too much your now resistless charms,
Those Age or Sickness soon or late disarms:
Good humor only teaches charms to last,
Still makes new conquests, and maintains the past;
Love, rais'd on Beauty, will like that decay,
Our hearts may bear its slender chain a day;
As flowery bands in wantonness are worn,
A morning's pleasure, and at evening torn;
This binds in ties more easy, yet more strong,
The willing heart, and only holds it long.
Thus Voiture's early care still shone the same,
And Montausier was only changed in name;
By this, ev'n now they live, ev'n now they charm,
Their wit still sparkling, and their flames still warm.
Now crown'd with myrtle, on th' Elysian coast,
Amid those lovers, joys his gentle Ghost:

Pleas'd, while with smiles his happy lines you view,
And finds a fairer Rambouillet in you.
The brightest eyes of France inspired his Muse;
The brightest eyes of Britain now peruse;
The dead, as living, 't is our Author's pride
Still to charm those who charm the world beside.

Alexander Pope

BELINDA

1711–12

Not with more glories, in th' ethereal plain,
The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
Launch'd on the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fair nymphs, and well-dress'd youths around her shone,
But every eye was fix'd on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those:
Favors to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide;
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.

Alexander Pope (from The Rape of the Lock)

WORTH MAKES THE MAN

1732–34

Honor and shame from no condition rise;
Act well your part, there all the honor lies.
Fortune in men has some small difference made,
One flaunts in rags, one flutters in brocade;
The cobbler aproned, and the parson gowned,
The friar hooded, and the monarch crowned.
"What differ more," you cry, "than crown and cowl!"
I'll tell you, friend! a wise man and a fool.
You'll find, if once the monarch acts the monk,
Or, cobbler-like, the parson will be drunk,
Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow;
The rest is all but leather or prunella.

Alexander Pope (*from An Essay on Man*)

THE UNITY OF NATURE

1732–34

See, through this air, this ocean, and this earth,
All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
Above, how high, progressive life may go!
Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
Vast chain of being! which from God began,
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
No glass can reach; from infinite to thee,
From thee to nothing. — On superior pow'rs
Were we to press, inferior might on ours;
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroy'd;
From Nature's chain whatever link you strike,
Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.
And, if each system in gradation roll
Alike essential to th' amazing whole,

The least confusion but in one, not all
That system only, but the whole must fall.
Let earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,
Planets and suns run lawless through the sky;
Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
Being on being wreck'd, and world on world;
Heaven's whole foundations to their centre nod,
And Nature trembles to the throne of God.
All this dread order break — for whom? for thee?
Vile worm! — Oh, madness! pride! impiety!

. . . . . .

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
That chang'd through all, and yet in all the same;
Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns:
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.

Alexander Pope (*from An Essay on Man*)

SALLY IN OUR ALLEY

1715

Of all the girls that are so smart
There's none like pretty Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley.

There is no lady in the land
  Is half so sweet as Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
  And she lives in our alley.

Her father he makes cabbage-nets,
  And through the streets does cry 'em;
Her mother she sells laces long
  To such as please to buy 'em;
But sure such folks could never
  So sweet a girl as Sally!
She is the darling of my heart,
  And she lives in our alley.

When she is by, I leave my work,
  I love her so sincerely;
My master comes like any Turk,
  And bangs me most severely:
But let him bang his bellyful,
  I'll bear it all for Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
  And she lives in our alley.

Of all the days that's in the week
  I dearly love but one day —
And that's the day that comes betwixt
  A Saturday and Monday;
For then I'm drest all in my best
  To walk abroad with Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
  And she lives in our alley.

My master carries me to church,
  And often I am blamed

Because I leave him in the lurch
As soon as text is named;
I leave the church in sermon-time
And slink away to Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley.

When Christmas comes about again,
O, [illegible] have money;
[illegible] box it all,
[illegible] honey:
[illegible] thousand pound,
I'd give it all to Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley.

My master and the neighbors all
Make game of me and Sally,
And, but for her, I'd better be
A slave and row a galley;
But when my seven long years are out,
O, then I'll marry Sally;
O, then we'll wed, and then we'll bed —
But not in our alley.

Henry Carey

MOLLY

When Molly smiles beneath her cow,
I feel my heart — I can't tell how;
When Molly is on Sunday drest,
On Sundays I can take no rest.

What can I do? On worky days
I leave my work on her to gaze.

What shall I say? At sermons, I
Forget the text when Molly's by.

Good master curate, teach me how
To mind your preaching, and my plough;
And if for this you'll raise a spell,
A good fat goose shall thank you well.

Author Unknown

ANGEL OR WOMAN

Bef. 1718

When thy beauty appears
In its graces and airs
All bright as an angel new dropt from the sky,
At distance I gaze and am awed by my fears:
So strangely you dazzle my eye!

But when without art
Your kind thoughts you impart,
When your love runs in blushes through every vein;
When it darts from your eyes, when it pants in your heart,
Then I know you're a woman again.

There's a passion and pride
In our sex (she replied),
And thus, might I gratify both, I would do:
Still an angel appear to each lover beside,
But still be a woman to you.

Thomas Parnell

STELLA'S BIRTHDAY, 1720

All travellers at first incline
Where'er they see the fairest sign;

And, if they find the chamber neat,
And like the liquor and the meat,
Will call again, and recommend
The Angel Inn to every friend.
What though the painting grows decay'd,
The House will never lose its trade:
Nay, tho' the treacherous tapster, Thomas,
Hangs a new angel two doors from us,
As fine as dauber's hands can make it,
In hopes that strangers may mistake it,
We think it both a shame and sin
To quit the true old Angel Inn.

Now this is Stella's case in fact;
An angel's face, a little cracked;
(Could poets, or could painters fix,
How angels look at thirty-six:)
This drew us in at first to find
In such a form an angel's mind;
And every virtue now supplies
The fainting rays of Stella's eyes.
See at her levee crowding swains,
Whom Stella freely entertains
With breeding, humor, wit, and sense,
And puts them to but small expense;
Their mind so plentifully fills,
And makes such reasonable bills,
So little gets for what she gives,
We really wonder how she lives!
And had her stock been less, no doubt
She must have long ago run out.

Then who can think we'll quit the place,
When Doll hangs out a newer face;
Or stop and light at Chloe's head,
With scraps and leavings to be fed?

Then, Chloe, still go on to prate

Of thirty-six, and thirty-eight;
Pursue your trade of scandal-picking,
Your hints, that Stella is no chicken;
Your innuendos, when you tell us
That Stella loves to talk with fellows:
And let me warn you to believe
A truth, for which your soul should grieve;
That should you live to see the day
When Stella's locks must all be gray,
When age must print a furrow'd trace
On every feature of her face;
That you, and all your senseless tribe,
Could art, or time, or nature bribe
To make you look like beauty's queen,
And hold forever at fifteen;
No bloom of youth can ever blind
The cracks and wrinkles of your mind;
All men of sense will pass your door,
And crowd to Stella's at fourscore.

Jonathan Swift

THE CLOCK AND DIAL

c. 1724

Ae day a Clock wad brag a Dial,
And put his qualities to trial;
Spak to him thus, "My neighbor, pray,
Can'st tell me what's the time of day?"
The Dial said, "I dinna ken." —
"Alack! what stand ye there for, then?" —
"I wait here till the sun shines bright,
For naught I ken but by his light":
"Wait on," quoth Clock, "I scorn his help,
Baith night and day my lane I skelp.

skelp, beat, tick.

Wind up my weights but anes a week,
Without him I can gang and speak;
Nor like an useless sumph I stand,
But constantly wheel round my hand;
Hark, hark, I strike just now the hour;
And I am right, ane — twa — three — four."
  Whilst thus the Clock was boasting loud,
The bleezing sun brak through a cloud;
The Dial, faithfu' to his guide,
Spake truth, and laid the thumper's pride.
"Ye see," said he, "I've dung you fair;
'Tis four hours and three-quarters mair.
My friend," he added, "count again,
And learn a wee to be less vain:
Ne'er brag of constant clavering cant,
And that your answers never want;
For you're not aye to be believed:
Wha trusts to you may be deceived.
Be counselled to behave like me;
For when I dinna clearly see
I always own I dinna ken,
And that's the way of wisest men."

Allan Ramsay

AY AND NO

A FABLE

Bef. 1732

In Fable all things hold discourse;
Then Words, no doubt, must talk of course.
  Once on a time, near Cannon-row,
Two hostile adverbs, Ay and No,
Were hastening to the field of fight,
And front to front stood opposite;

dung, beaten.

Before each general join'd the van,
Ay, the more courteous knight, began:
"Stop, peevish Particle! beware!
I'm told you are not such a bear,
But sometimes yield when offer'd fair.
Suffer yon folks a while to tattle;
'Tis we who must decide the battle.
Whene'er we war on yonder stage,
With various fate and equal rage,
The nation trembles at each blow
That No gives Ay, and Ay gives No;
Yet in expensive long contention,
We gain nor office, grant, or pension.
Why then should kinsfolk quarrel thus?
(For two of you make one of us.)
To some wise statesman let us go,
Where each his proper use may know:
He may admit two such commanders,
And make those wait who serv'd in Flanders.
Let's quarter on a great man's tongue,
A treasury lord, not Maister Y——g.
Obsequious at his high command,
Ay shall march forth to tax the land;
Impeachments No can best resist,
And Ay supports the Civil List:
Ay, quick as Cæsar, wins the day,
And No, like Fabius, by delay.
Sometimes in mutual sly disguise,
Let Ay's seem No's, and No's seem Ay's;
Ay's be in courts denials meant,
And No's in bishops give consent."
Thus Ay propos'd — and, for reply,
No, for the first time, answer'd "Ay!"
They parted with a thousand kisses,
And fight e'er since for pay, like Swisses.

John Gay (from Fables, Pt. II)

THE VALE OF INDOLENCE

1736–48

In lowly dale, fast by a river's side,
With woody hill o'er hill encompass'd round,
A most enchanting wizard did abide,
Than whom a fiend more fell is nowhere found.
It was, I ween, a lovely spot of ground;
And there a season atween June and May,
Half prankt with Spring, with Summer half imbrown'd,
A listless climate made, where, sooth to say,
No living wight could work, ne carèd even for play.

Was nought around but images of rest;
Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns between;
And flowery beds that slumb'rous influence kest,
From poppies breathed; and beds of pleasant green,
Where never yet was creeping creature seen.
Meantime unnumber'd glittering streamlets play'd,
And hurlèd everywhere their waters sheen;
That, as they bicker'd through the sunny glade,
Though restless still themselves, a lulling murmur made.

Join'd to the prattle of the purling rills,
Were heard the lowing herds along the vale,
And flocks loud-bleating from the distant hills,
And vacant shepherds piping in the dale:
And now and then sweet Philomel would wail,
Or stock-doves 'plain amid the forest deep,
That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale;

kest, kist (?).

And still a coil the grasshopper did keep;
Yet all these sounds yblent inclinèd all to sleep.

Full in the passage of the vale, above,
A sable, silent, solemn forest stood;
Where nought but shadowy forms was seen to move,
As *Idlesse* fancy'd in her dreaming mood:
And up the hills, on either side, a wood
Of blackening pines, ay waving to and fro,
Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood;
And where this valley winded out, below,
The murmuring main was heard, and scarcely heard, to flow.

A pleasing land of drowsy-head it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
For ever flashing round a summer sky;
There eke the soft delights, that witchingly
Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast,
And the calm pleasures always hover'd nigh;
But whate'er smack'd of noyance, or unrest,
Was far, far off expell'd from this delicious nest.

James Thomson (from The Castle of Indolence)

A HUNTING WE WILL GO

Bef. 1745

The dusky night rides down the sky,
And ushers in the morn:
The hounds all join in glorious cry,
The huntsman winds his horn,
And a hunting we will go.

Idlesse, Idleness.

The wife around her husband throws
Her arms to make him stay;
"My dear, it rains, it hails, it blows;
You cannot hunt to-day."
Yet a hunting we will go.

Away they fly to 'scape the rout,
Their steeds they soundly switch;
Some are thrown in, and some thrown out,
And some thrown in the ditch.
Yet a hunting we will go.

Sly Reynard now like lightning flies,
And sweeps across the vale;
And when the hounds too near he spies,
He drops his bushy tail.
Then a hunting we will go.

Fond Echo seems to like the sport,
And join the jovial cry;
The woods, the hills, the sound retort,
And music fills the sky,
When a hunting we do go.

At last his strength to faintness worn,
Poor Reynard ceases flight;
Then hungry, homeward we return,
To feast away the night,
And a drinking we do go.

Ye jovial hunters, in the morn
Prepare then for the chase;
Rise at the sounding of the horn
And health with sport embrace,
When a hunting we do go.

Henry Fielding

DIRGE IN CYMBELINE

SUNG BY GUIDERUS AND AVIRAGUS OVER FIDELE SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD

1744

To fair Fidele's grassy tomb
  Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,
  And rifle all the breathing spring.

No wailing ghosts shall dare appear
  To vex with shrieks this quiet grove;
But shepherd lads assemble here,
  And melting virgins own their love.

No withered witch shall here be seen;
  No goblins lead their nightly crew;
The female fays shall haunt the green,
  And dress thy grave with pearly dew!

The redbreast oft, at evening hours,
  Shall kindly lend his little aid,
With hoary moss, and gathered flowers,
  To deck the ground where thou art laid.

When howling winds and beating rain,
  In tempests shake the sylvan cell;
Or 'midst the chase, on every plain,
  The tender thought on thee shall dwell;

Each lonely scene shall thee restore;
  For thee the tear be duly shed;
Beloved till life can charm no more,
  And mourned till pity's self be dead.

William Collins

ODE

WRITTEN IN 1746

How sleep the brave who sink to rest,
By all their country's wishes blest!
When spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There honor comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And freedom shall awhile repair,
To dwell, a weeping hermit, there!

William Collins

ODE TO EVENING

1746

If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song
May hope, chaste eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs, and dying gales,

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short, shrill shriek, flits by on leathern wing;
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
Now teach me, maid composed,
To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale,
May, not unseemly, with its stillness suit,
As, musing slow, I hail
Thy genial loved return.

For when thy folding star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant hours, and elves
Who slept in buds the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
The pensive pleasures sweet
Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile,
Or upland fallows grey
Reflect its last cool gleam.

But when chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut,
That from the mountain's side,
Views wilds, and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires;
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest eve!
While summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

While sallow autumn fills thy lap with leaves;
Or winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes:

So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,
Shall fancy, friendship, science, rose-lipped health,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favorite name!

William Collins

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN AT THE OPENING OF DRURY LANE THEATRE, 1747

When Learning's triumph o'er her barb'rous foes
First reared the stage, immortal Shakespeare rose;
Each change of many-colored life he drew,
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new:
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting Time toiled after him in vain.
His pow'rful strokes presiding Truth impressed,
And unresisted Passion stormed the breast.
Then Jonson came, instructed from the school,
To please in method, and invent by rule;
His studious patience and laborious art
By regular approach assailed the heart:
Cold Approbation gave the ling'ring bays,
For those, who durst not censure, scarce could praise.
A mortal born, he met the gen'ral doom,
But left, like Egypt's kings, a lasting tomb,

The wits of Charles found easier ways to fame,
Nor wished for Jonson's art, or Shakespeare's flame.
Themselves they studied, as they felt they writ;
Intrigue was plot, obscenity was wit.
Vice always found a sympathetic friend;
They pleased their age, and did not aim to mend.
Yet bards like these aspired to lasting praise,
And proudly hoped to pimp in future days.
Their cause was gen'ral, their supports were strong,
Their slaves were willing, and their reign was long:
Till Shame regained the post that Sense betrayed,
And Virtue called Oblivion to her aid.

Then, crushed by rules, and weakened as refined,
For years the pow'r of Tragedy declined;
From bard to bard the frigid caution crept,
Till Declamation roared whilst Passion slept;
Yet still did Virtue deign the stage to tread,
Philosophy remained, though Nature fled.
But forced, at length, her ancient reign to quit,
She saw great Faustus lay the ghost of Wit;
Exulting Folly hailed the joyful day,
And Pantomime and Song confirmed her sway.

But who the coming changes can presage,
And mark the future periods of the stage?
Perhaps, if skill could distant times explore,
New Behns, new Durfeys, yet remain in store;
Perhaps when Lear has raved, and Hamlet died,
On flying cars new sorcerers may ride;
Perhaps (for who can guess th' effects of chance?)
Here Hunt may box, or Mahomet may dance.

Hard is his lot that, here by Fortune placed,
Must watch the wild vicissitudes of taste;
With ev'ry meteor of caprice must play,
And chase the new-blown bubbles of the day.

Hunt was a boxer and Mahomet a rope-dancer of the time.

Ah! let not Censure term our fate our choice,
The stage but echoes back the public voice;
The drama's laws, the drama's patrons give,
For we that live to please, must please to live.
Then prompt no more the follies you decry,
As tyrants doom their tools of guilt to die;
'Tis yours, this night, to bid the reign commence
Of rescued Nature and reviving Sense;
To chase the charms of Sound, the pomp of Show,
For useful Mirth and salutary Woe;
Bid scenic Virtue form the rising age,
And Truth diffuse her radiance from the stage.

Samuel Johnson

ON THE DEATH OF MR. ROBERT LEVET, A PRACTISER IN PHYSIC

1782

Condemn'd to Hope's delusive mine,
As on we toil from day to day,
By sudden blasts or slow decline
Our social comforts drop away.

Well tried through many a varying year,
See Levet to the grave descend,
Officious, innocent, sincere,
Of ev'ry friendless name the friend.

Yet still he fills affection's eye,
Obscurely wise and coarsely kind;
Nor, letter'd Arrogance, deny
Thy praise to merit unrefined.

When fainting nature call'd for aid,
And hov'ring death prepared the blow,

His vig'rous remedy display'd
  The pow'r of art without the show.

In Misery's darkest cavern known,
  His useful care was ever nigh,
Where hopeless Anguish pour'd his groan,
  And lonely Want retired to die.

No summons mock'd by chill delay,
  No petty gain disdain'd by pride;
The modest wants of ev'ry day
  The toil of ev'ry day supplied.

His virtues walk'd their narrow round,
  Nor made a pause nor left a void;
And sure th' Eternal Master found
  The single talent well employ'd.

The busy day, the peaceful night,
  Unfelt, uncounted, glided by;
His frame was firm — his powers were bright,
  Though now his eightieth year was nigh.

Then with no fiery throbbing pain,
  No cold gradations of decay,
Death broke at once the vital chain,
  And freed his soul the nearest way.

Samuel Johnson

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

Finished 1751

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
  The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
  And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

Save where from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke:
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil.
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;

Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,

Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes —

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool, sequester'd vale of life
They kept the even tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unlettered Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
  This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
  Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
  Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
  E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonor'd dead,
  Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
  Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate —

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
  "Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
  To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
  That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
  And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
  Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
  Or crazed with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
  Along the heath, and near his favorite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
  Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he.

"The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.

["There scatter'd oft, the earliest of the year,
By hands unseen, are showers of violets found;
The redbreast loves to build and warble there,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground."]

EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
He gain'd from Heav'n ('Twas all he wish'd) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(*There they alike in trembling hope repose*)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

Thomas Gray

THE PROGRESS OF POESY

A PINDARIC ODE

W. 1754

Ia. Strophe

Awake, Æolian lyre, awake,
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.

Æolian lyre, the lyre of Pindar

From Helicon's harmonious springs
A thousand rills their mazy progress take:
The laughing flowers, that round them blow,
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.
Now the rich stream of music winds along,
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,
Through verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign:
Now rolling down the steep amain,
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour:
The rocks, and nodding groves, rebellow to the roar.

Ib. Antistrophe

Oh! Sovereign of the willing soul,
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,
Enchanting shell! the sullen Cares,
And frantic Passions hear thy soft control.
On Thracia's hills the Lord of War,
Has curbed the fury of his car,
And dropped his thirsty lance at thy command.
Perching on the sceptred hand
Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feathered king
With ruffled plumes, and flagging wing:
Quenched in dark clouds of slumber lie
The terror of his beak, the lightning of his eye.

Ic. Epode

Thee the voice, the dance, obey,
Tempered to thy warbled lay.
O'er Idalia's velvet-green
The rosy-crownèd Loves are seen
On Cytherea's day
With antic Sports, and blue-eyed Pleasures,
Frisking light in frolic measures;

Ceres' reign, the fields. *shell*, the lyre, *Lord of War*, Mars.
Idalia, town in Cyprus, where there was a temple to Venus.
Cytherea, Venus.

Now pursuing, now retreating,
Now in circling troops they meet:
To brisk notes in cadence beating
Glance their many-twinkling feet.
Slow melting strains their Queen's approach declare:
Where'er she turns the Graces homage pay.
With arms sublime, that float upon the air,
In gliding state she wins her easy way:
O'er her warm cheek, and rising bosom, move
The bloom of young Desire, and purple light of Love.

IIa. Strophe

Man's feeble race what Ills await,
Labor and Penury, the racks of Pain,
Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,
And Death, sad refuge from the storms of Fate!
The fond complaint, my Song, disprove,
And justify the laws of Jove.
Say, has he giv'n in vain the heav'nly Muse?
Night, and all her sickly dews,
Her Spectres wan, the Birds of boding cry,
He gives to range the dreary sky:
Till down the eastern cliffs afar
Hyperion's march they spy, and glitt'ring shafts of war.

IIb. Antistrophe

In climes beyond the solar road,
Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam,
The Muse has broke the twilight-gloom
To cheer the shiv'ring Native's dull abode.
And oft, beneath the od'rous shade
Of Chili's boundless forests laid,
She deigns to hear the savage Youth repeat

Hyperion's march, the sunrise.

In loose numbers wildly sweet
Their feather-cinctured Chiefs, and dusky Loves.
Her track, where'er the Goddess roves,
Glory pursue, and generous Shame,
Th' unconquerable Mind, and Freedom's holy flame.

IIc. Epode

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,
Isles, that crown th' Ægean deep,
Fields, that cool Ilissus laves,
Where Mæander's amber waves
In ling'ring Lab'rinths creep,
How do your tuneful Echoes languish,
Mute, but to the voice of Anguish?
Where each old poetic Mountain
Inspiration breathed around:
Ev'ry shade and hallowed Fountain
Murmured deep a solemn sound:
Till the sad Nine in Greece's evil hour
Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.
Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant-Power,
And coward Vice, that revels in her chains.
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,
They sought, O Albion! next thy sea-encircled coast.

IIIa. Strophe

Far from the sun and summer-gale,
In thy green lap was Nature's Darling laid,
What time, where lucid Avon strayed,
To Him the mighty Mother did unveil
Her awful face: The dauntless Child
Stretched forth his little arms, and smiled.
This pencil take (she said) whose colors clear
Richly paint the vernal year:

Latian plains, Italy. *Albion*, England.
Nature's Darling, Shakespeare.

Thine too these golden keys, immortal Boy!
This can unlock the gates of Joy;
Of Horror that, and thrilling Fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic Tears.

IIIb. Antistrophe

Nor second He, that rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,
The secrets of th' Abyss to spy.
He passed the flaming bounds of Place and Time:
The living Throne, the sapphire-blaze,
Where Angels tremble, while they gaze,
He saw; but blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.
Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car,
Wide o'er the fields of Glory bear
Two Coursers of ethereal race,
With necks in thunder clothed, and long-resounding pace.

IIIc. Epode

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er
Scatters from her pictured urn
Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.
But ah! 'tis heard no more —
Oh! Lyre divine, what daring Spirit
Wakes thee now? though he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban Eagle bear
Sailing with supreme dominion
Through the azure deep of air:
Yet oft before his infant eyes would run

He, Milton. *Theban Eagle*, Pindar.

Such forms, as glitter in the Muse's ray
With orient hues, unborrowed of the Sun:
Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
Beneath the Good how far — but far above the Great.

Thomas Gray

ROUNDELAY

1768

O sing unto my roundelay,
O drop the briny tear with me;
Dance no more at holyday,
Like a running river be:
My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

Black his cryne as the winter night,
White his rode as the summer snow,
Red his face as the morning light;
Cold he lies in the grave below:
My love is dead. . . .

Sweet his tongue as the throstle's note,
Quick in dance as thought can be,
Deft his tabor, cudgel stout;
O he lies by the willow-tree!
My love is dead. . . .

Hark! the raven flaps his wing
In the brier'd dell below;
Hark! the death-owl loud doth sing
To the nightmares, as they go:
My love is dead. . . .

cryne, hair. *rode*, complexion or skin.

See! the white moon shines on high;
Whiter than my true love's shroud:
Whiter than the morning sky,
Whiter than the evening cloud:
My love is dead. . . .

Here upon my true love's grave
Shall the barren flowers be laid;
Not one holy saint to save
All the coldness of a maid:
My love is dead. . . .

With my hands I'll dent the briers
Round his holy corse to gre:
Ouph and fairy, light your fires,
Here my body still shall be:
My love is dead. . . .

Come, with acorn-cup and thorn,
Drain my heartès blood away;
Life and all its good I scorn,
Dance by night, or feast by day:
My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

Thomas Chatterton

TWO MEN

1770

I. A VILLAGE PREACHER

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden-flower grows wild,

dent, fasten. *gre*, GROW

There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change, his place;
Unskilful he to fawn or seek for power
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More bent to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train —
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain;
The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard, descending, swept his aged breast;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away;
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields are won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus, to relieve the wretched was his pride;
And even his failings leaned to virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt, at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt, for all:
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismayed,
The reverend champion stood. At his control

Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.
At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools who came to scoff remained to pray.
The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran:
Even children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown to share the good man's smile;
His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed —
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed:
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in Heaven.
As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the gale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Oliver Goldsmith (from The Deserted Village)

II. A VILLAGE SCHOOLMASTER

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view;
I knew him well, and every truant knew:
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes (for many a joke had he);
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned.

Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault:
The village all declared how much he knew –
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And e'en the story ran that he could gauge.
In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,
For e'en, though vanquished, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.
But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumphed is forgot.

Oliver Goldsmith (from The Deserted Village)

AULD ROBIN GRAY

1771

When the sheep are in the fauld, and the kye a' at hame,
And a' the weary warld to rest are gane,
The waes o' my heart fa' in showers frae my e'e,
While my gudeman lies sound by me.

Young Jamie lo'ed me weel, and sought me for his bride;
But saving a croun he had naething else beside:
To make the croun a pund, young Jamie gaed to sea;
And the croun and the pund were baith for me.

He hadna been awa' a week but only twa,
When my father brak his arm, and the cow was stown awa';
My mother she fell sick, — and my Jamie at the sea —
And auld Robin Gray came a-courtin' me.

My father couldna work, and my mother couldna spin:
I toil'd day and night, but their bread I couldna win;
Auld Robin maintain'd them baith, and wi' tears in his e'e
Said, "Jennie, for their sakes, O, marry me!"

My heart it said nay; I look'd for Jamie back;
But the wind it blew high, and the ship was a wrack;
His ship it was a wrack — Why didna Jamie dee?
Or why do I live to cry, Wae's me!

My father urged me sair: my mother didna speak:
But she look'd in my face till my heart was like to break:
They gi'ed him my hand, tho' my heart was at the sea;
Sae auld Robin Gray he was gudeman to me.

I hadna been a wife a week but only four,
When mournfu' as I sat on the stane at the door,
I saw Jamie's wraith, — for I couldna think it he,
Till he said, "I'm come hame to marry thee."

O sair, sair did we greet, and muckle did we say;
We took but ae kiss, and we tore ourselves away:
I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to dee;
And why was I born to say, Wae's me!

I gang like a ghaist, and I carena to spin;
I daurna think on Jamie, for that wad be a sin;
But I'll do my best a gude wife aye to be,
For auld Robin Gray he is kind to me.

Lady Anne Lindsay

TO HIS WIFE ON THE SIXTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF HER WEDDING-DAY, WITH A RING

c. 1771

"Thee, Mary, with this ring I wed,"
So sixteen years ago I said —
Behold another ring! "for what?"
To wed thee o'er again — why not?
With the first ring I married youth,
Grace, beauty, innocence, and truth;
Taste long admired, sense long rever'd,
And all my Molly then appear'd.
If she, by merit since disclosed,
Prove twice the woman I supposed,
I plead that double merit now,
To justify a double vow.
Here then to-day, with faith as sure;
With ardor as intense and pure,
As when amidst the rites divine
I took thy troth, and plighted mine,
To thee, sweet girl, my second ring,
A token and a pledge I bring;
With this I wed, till death us part,
Thy riper virtues to my heart;
These virtues which, before untried,
The wife has added to the bride;
Those virtues, whose progressive claim,
Endearing wedlock's very name,
My soul enjoys, my song approves,
For conscience' sake as well as love's.
For why? They teach me hour by hour
Honor's high thought, affection's power,
Discretion's deed, sound judgment's sentence,
And teach me all things — but repentance.

Samuel Bishop

THERE'S NAE LUCK ABOUT THE HOUSE

c. 1771

And are ye sure the news is true?
And are ye sure he's weel?
Is this a time to think o' wark?
Mak haste, lay by your wheel;
Is this the time to spin a thread,
When Colin's at the door?
Reach down my cloak, I'll to the quay,
And see him come ashore.
For there's nae luck about the house,
There's nae luck at a';
There's little pleasure in the house
When our gudeman's awa'.

And gie to me my bigonet,
My bishop's satin gown;
For I maun tell the baillie's wife
That Colin's in the town.
My Turkey slippers maun gae on,
My stockings pearly blue;
It's a' to pleasure our gudeman,
For he's baith leal and true.

Rise, lass, and mak a clean fireside,
Put on the muckle pot;
Gie little Kate her button gown,
And Jock his Sunday coat;
And mak their shoon as black as slaes,
Their hose as white as snaw;
It's a' to pleasure my gudeman,
For he's been lang awa'.

bigonet, cap or head-dress. *slaes*, sloes, black plums.

There's twa fat hens upo' the bauk,
  Been fed this month and mair;
Mak haste and thraw their necks about,
  That Colin weel may fare;
And mak our table neat and clean,
  Gar ilka thing look braw,
For wha can tell how Colin fared
  When he was far awa'?

Sae true his heart, sae smooth his speech,
  His breath's like caller air;
His very foot has music in't,
  As he comes up the stair.
And will I see his face again?
  And will I hear him speak?
I'm downright dizzy with the thought,—
  In troth, I'm like to greet.

The cauld blasts of the winter wind,
  That thrillèd through my heart,
They're a' blown by; I ha'e him safe,
  Till death we'll never part:
But what puts parting in my head?
  It may be far awa';
The present moment is our ain,
  The neist we never saw.

Since Colin's weel, I'm weel content,
  I ha'e nae mair to crave;
Could I but live to mak him blest,
  I'm blest above the lave:
And will I see his face again?
  And will I hear him speak?

bauk, cross-beam of a house. *thraw*, wring. *caller*, fresh.
greet, weep. *neist*, next. *lave*, rest, others.

I'm downright dizzy wi' the thought, —
In troth, I'm like to greet.
For there's nae luck about the house,
There's nae luck at a';
There's little pleasure in the house
When our gudeman's awa'.

William Julius Mickle (also ascribed to Jane Adam)

TO AN INFANT NEWLY BORN

TETRASTICH FROM THE PERSIAN

c. 1772

On parent knees, a naked new-born child,
Weeping thou sat'st, while all around thee smiled:
So live that, sinking in thy last long sleep,
Calm thou mayst smile while all around thee weep.

Sir William Jones

AN EPISTLE

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

c. 1780 (?)

Dear Joseph — five-and-twenty years ago —
Alas, how time escapes! — 'tis even so —
With frequent intercourse, and always sweet,
And always friendly, we were wont to cheat
A tedious hour — and now we never meet!
As some grave gentleman in Terence says,
('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days,)
Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings —
Strange fluctuation of all human things!
True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,
But distance only cannot change the heart:
And, were I call'd to prove th' assertion true,
One proof should serve — a reference to you.

Whence comes it then, that in the wane of life,
Though nothing have occur'd to kindle strife,
We find the friends we fancied we had won,
Though num'rous once, reduc'd to few or none?
Can gold grow worthless, that has stood the touch?
No; gold they seem'd, but they were never such.
Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe,
Swinging the parlor door upon its hinge,
Dreading a negative, and overaw'd
Lest he should trespass, begg'd to go abroad.
"Go, fellow! — whither?" — turning short about —
"Nay, stay at home — you're always going out."
"'Tis but a step, sir, just at the street's end."
"For what?" — "And please you, sir, to see a friend."
"A friend!" Horatio cried, and seem'd to start —
"Yea, marry shalt thou, and with all my heart. —
And fetch my cloak; for, though the night be raw,
I'll see him too — the first I ever saw."
I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,
And was his plaything often when a child;
But somewhat at that moment pinch'd him close,
Else he was seldom bitter or morose.
Perhaps his confidence just then betray'd,
His grief might prompt him with the speech he made;
Perhaps 'twas mere good-humor gave it birth,
The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.
Howe'er it was, his language in my mind,
Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.
But not to moralize too much, and strain
To prove an evil, of which all complain,
(I hate long arguments verbosely spun,)
One story more, dear Hill, and I have done.
Once on a time an emp'ror, a wise man,
No matter where, in China, or Japan,

Decreed, that whosoever should offend
Against the well-known duties of a friend,
Convicted once should ever after wear
But half a coat, and show his bosom bare,
The punishment importing this, no doubt,
That all was naught within, and all found out.
O happy Britain! we have not to fear
Such hard and arbitrary measure here;
Else, could a law, like that which I relate,
Once have the sanction of our triple state,
Some few, that I have known in days of old,
Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold;
While, you, my friend, whatever wind should blow,
Might traverse England safely to and fro,
An honest man, close-button'd to the chin,
Broad cloth without, and a warm heart within.

William Cowper

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

1782

Toll for the brave!
The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore!

Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave!
  Brave Kempenfelt is gone;
His last sea-fight is fought;
  His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;
  No tempest gave the shock;
She sprang no fatal leak;
  She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath;
  His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
  With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,
  Once dreaded by our foes!
And mingle with our cup
  The tears that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
  And she may float again
Full charged with England's thunder,
  And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
  His victories are o'er;
And he and his eight hundred
  Shall plough the wave no more.

William Cowper

THE JACKDAW

1782

There is a bird who, by his coat
And by the hoarseness of his note,
  Might be supposed a crow;

A great frequenter of the church,
Where, bishop-like, he finds a perch,
And dormitory too.

Above the steeple shines a plate,
That turns and turns to indicate
From what point blows the weather.
Look up — your brains begin to swim,
'Tis in the clouds — that pleases him,
He chooses it the rather.

Fond of the speculative height,
Thither he wings his airy flight,
And thence securely sees
The bustle and the rareeshow,
That occupy mankind below,
Secure and at his ease.

You think, no doubt, he sits and muses
On future broken bones and bruises,
If he should chance to fall.
No: not a single thought like that
Employs his philosophic pate,
Or troubles it at all.

He sees that this great roundabout,
The world, with all its motley rout,
Church, army, physic, law,
Its customs and its businesses,
Is no concern at all of his,
And says — what says he? — *Caw.*

Thrice happy bird! I too have seen
Much of the vanities of men;
And, sick of having seen 'em,

Would cheerfully these limbs resign
For such a pair of wings as thine,
And such a head between 'em.

William Cowper (from the Latin of Vincent Bourne)

TO MARY UNWIN

1793

Mary! I want a lyre with other strings,
Such aid from Heaven as some have feign'd they drew,
An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new
And undebased by praise of meaner things;
That ere through age or woe I shed my wings,
I may record thy worth with honor due,
In verse as musical as thou art true,
And that immortalizes whom it sings:
But thou hast little need. There is a Book
By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,
On which the eyes of God not rarely look,
A chronicle of actions just and bright —
There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine;
And since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

William Cowper

SOMEBODY

Late 18 cent.

Och hon for somebody!
Och hey for somebody!
I wad do — what wad I not,
For the sake o' somebody?

My heart is sair, I daurna tell
My heart is sair for somebody;
I will wauk a winter's night,
For a sight o' somebody.

wauk, wake.

If somebody were come again,
Then somebody maun cross the main,
And ilka ane will get his ain,
And I will see my somebody.

What need I kame my tresses bright,
Or why should coal or candle-light
E'er shine in my bower day or night,
Since gane is my dear somebody?

Oh! I hae grutten mony a day
For ane that's banished far away;
I canna sing, and maunna say
How sair I grieve for somebody.

Author Unknown (possibly James Hogg)

MY AULD BREEKS

My mither men't my auld breeks,
An' wow! but they were duddy,
And sent me to get Mally shod
At Robin Tamson's smiddy;
The smiddy stands beside the burn
That wimples through the clachan,
I never yet gae by the door,
But aye I fa' a-lauchin'.

For Robin was a walthy carle,
An' had ae bonnie dochter,
Yet ne'er wad let her tak a man,
Tho' mony lads had socht her;
But what think ye o' my exploit?
The time our mare was shoeing,

grutten, wept. *breeks*, breeches. *duddy*, ragged.
clachan, village. *carle*, old fellow.

I slippit up beside the lass,
And briskly fell a-wooing.

An' aye she e'ed my auld breeks,
The time that we sat crackin',
Quo' I, "My lass, ne'er mind the clouts,
I've new anes for the makin';
But gin ye'll just come hame wi' me,
An' lea'e the carle, your father,
Ye'se get my breeks to keep in trim,
Mysel', and a' thegither."

"Deed, lad," quo' she, "Your offer's fair,
I really think I'll tak it,
Sae, gang awa', get out the mare,
We'll baith slip on the back o 't:
For gin I wait my father's time,
I'll wait till I be fifty;
But na! — I'll marry in my prime,
An' mak a wife most thrifty."

Wow! Robin was an angry man,
At tyning o' his dochter:
Thro' all the kintra-side he ran,
An' far an' near he socht her;
But when he cam to our fire-end,
An' fand us baith thegither,
Quo' I, "Gudeman, I've ta'en your bairn,
An' ye may tak my mither."

Auld Robin girn'd an' sheuk his pow,
"Guid sooth!" quo' he, "Ye're merry,
But I'll just tak ye at your word,
An' end this hurry-burry."

e'ed, eyed. *crackin'*, chatting. *clouts*, patches.
tyning, losing. *girn'd*, grimaced. *pow*, head.

So Robin an' our auld wife
Agreed to creep thegither;
Now, I hae Robin Tamson's pet,
An' Robin has my mither.

Alexander Rodger

THE HUNDRED PIPERS

Wi' a hundred pipers an' a', an' a',
Wi' a hundred pipers an' a', an' a';
We'll up an' gie them a blaw, a blaw,
Wi' a hundred pipers an' a', an' a'.

Wi' a hundred pipers an' a', an' a',
Wi' a hundred pipers an' a', an' a',
We'll up and gie them a blaw, a blaw.
Wi' a hundred pipers an' a', an' a'.
Oh! it's owre the Border awa', awa',
It's owre the Border awa', awa',
We'll on and we'll march to Carlisle ha',
Wi' its yetts, its castell, an' a', an' a'.

Oh! our sodger lads looked braw, looked braw,
Wi' their tartans, an' kilts, an' a', an' a',
Wi' their bonnets, an' feathers, an' glittering gear,
An' pibrochs sounding sweet and clear.
Will they a' return to their ain dear glen?
Will they a' return, our Hieland men?
Second-sighted Sandy looked fu' wae,
And mothers grat when they marched away.

Oh wha is foremost o' a', o' a'?
Oh wha does follow the blaw, the blaw?

yetts, gates. *grat*, wept.

Bonnie Charlie, the king o' us a', hurra!
Wi' his hundred pipers an' a', an' a'.
His bonnet an' feather, he's wavin' high,
His prancin' steed maist seems to fly,
The nor' wind plays wi' his curly hair,
While the pipers blaw an unco flare.

The Esk was swollen, sae red and sae deep,
But shouther to shouther the brave lads keep;
Twa thousand swam owre to fell English ground,
An' danced themselves dry to the pibroch's sound.
Dumfounder'd, the English saw — they saw —
Dumfounder'd, they heard the blaw, the blaw;
Dumfounder'd, they a' ran awa', awa',
From the hundred pipers an' a', an' a'.

Carolina Oliphant, Baroness Nairne

JOHNNIE COPE

Bef. 1803

Hey, Johnnie Cope, are ye wauking yet?
Or are your drums a-beating yet?
If ye were wauking I wad wait
To gang to the coals i' the morning.

Cope sent a letter frae Dunbar:
"Charlie, meet me an ye daur,
And I'll learn you the art o' war
If you'll meet me in the morning."

When Charlie looked the letter upon
He drew his sword the scabbard from:
"Come, follow me, my merry, merry men,
And we'll meet Johnnie Cope in the morning!

wauking, waking. *coals*, coal-pits.

"Now, Johnnie, be as good's your word;
Come, let us try both fire and sword;
And dinna rin away like a frighted bird,
That's chased frae its nest in the morning."

When Johnnie Cope he heard of this,
He thought it wadna be amiss
To hae a horse in readiness
To flee awa' in the morning.

Fy now, Johnnie, get up and rin;
The Highland bagpipes mak a din;
It's best to sleep in a hale skin,
For 'twill be a bluidy morning.

When Johnnie Cope to Dunbar came,
They speered at him, "Where's a' your men?"
"The deil confound me gin I ken,
For I left them a' i' the morning."

"Now, Johnnie, troth, ye are na blate
To come wi' the news o' your ain defeat,
And leave your men in sic a strait
Sae early in the morning."

"I' faith," quo' Johnnie, "I got a fleg
Wi' their claymores and philabegs;
If I face them again, deil break my legs!
So I wish you a gude morning."

Adam Skirving

speered at, asked of. *blate*, shy, backward.
fleg, fright. *claymores*, swords. *philabegs*, kilts.

TAM O' SHANTER

A TALE

1790

Of Brownyis and of Bogillis full is this Buke

GAWAIN DOUGLAS

When chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors, neebors meet;
As market-days are wearin' late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
An' gettin fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter:
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses
For honest men and bonnie lasses).

O Tam, hadst thou but been sae wise,
As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was nae sober;
That ilka melder wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on:

chapman billies, pedlar fellows.
tak the gate, go home.
fand, found.
blellum, babbler.
nappy, ale.
skellum, scamp.
melder, grist, grinding.
drouthy, thirsty.
slaps, openings in fences.
blethering, loose-talking.
ca'd, driven.

That at the Lord's house, even on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied that, late or soon
Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon,
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk
By Alloway's auld, haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames, it gars me greet
To think how monie counsels sweet,
How monie lengthen'd, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: — Ae market-night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by the ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnie,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy cronie;
Tam lo'd him like a very brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither!
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious
Wi' secret favors, sweet and precious;
The Souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did not mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel' amang the nappy.
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,

warlocks, wizards. *mirk*, dark. *gars me greet*, makes me weep.
reaming swats, foaming ale. *souter*, cobbler.

The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread;
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white — then melts forever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
Evanishing amid the storm.
No man can tether time or tide;
The hour approaches Tam maun ride;
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour Tam mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattling showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd:
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.
Weel-mounted on his gray mare, Meg —
A better never lifted leg —
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scotch sonnet:
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares;

skelpit, clattered. *dub*, puddle.
sonnet, song. *bogles*, goblins.

Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Where ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was 'cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drunken Charlie brak's neckbane;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll;
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze;
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing;
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn,
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tipenny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquabae, we'll face the devil!
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle.
But Maggie stood, right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light;
And, vow! Tam saw an unco sight!

Warlocks and witches in a dance;
Nae cotillion, brent-new frae France,

houlets, owls. *meikle*, great. *bleeze*, blaze. *usquabæ*, whiskey. *smoor'd*, smothered. *whins*, furze. *bore*, crevice. *swats sae ream'd*, ale so foamed. *birks*, birches. *cairn*, stone-heap. *tipenny*, twopenny ale. *boddle*, copper.

But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
At whinnock-bunker in the east,
There sat Auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A tousie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge;
He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And, by some devilish cantraip sleight,
Each in its cauld hand held a light,
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table
A murder's banes in gibbet-airns;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns;
A thief, new-cutted frae a rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' bluid red-rusted;
Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted;
A garter, which a babe had strangled;
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft —
The gray hairs yet stuck to the heft;
Wi' mair o' horrible an' awefu',
Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glower'd, amaz'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The piper loud and louder blew,
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,

whinnock-bunker, window-seat.
gart them skirl, made them shriek.
cantraip sleight, magic trick.
gab, mouth.
tousie tyke, towsled cur.
dirl, ring.
haly, holy.
rape, rope.
cleekit, linked arms.
Till ilka, etc., Till each old woman sweated and steamed.

And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark.

Now Tam! O Tam! had thae been queans
A' plump and strapping in their teens!
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen!
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them aff my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonie burdies!

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
Louping and flinging on a crummock,
I wonder did na turn thy stomach!

But Tam kend what was what fu' brawlie:
There was ae winsome wench and wawlie,
That night enlisted in the core,
Lang after kend on Carrick shore
(For monie a beast to dead she shot,
An' perish'd monie a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear);
Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.

coost, cast. *duddies*, clothes. *wark*, work.
linket at it, etc., went at it in her shirt. *queans*, wenches.
creeshie, greasy.
seventeen, etc., very fine linen, with 1700 threads to the breadth.
breeks, breeches. *hurdies*, hips. *bonie burdies*, pretty lasses.
rigwoodie, skinny. *spean*, wean (by disgust).
crummock, crutch. *brawlie*, finely. *wawlie*, strapping.
core, company. *corn and bear*, wheat and barley.
cutty sark, etc., short shirt of coarse linen. *vauntie*, proud.

Ah! little kend thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('Twas a' her riches),
Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cour;
Sic flights are far beyond her power;
To sing how Nannie lap and flang
(A souple jad she was, and strang),
And how Tam stood like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd;
Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main.
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out: "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant all was dark;
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' monie an eldritch skriech and hollo.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'lt get thy fairin!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!

coft, bought.
tint, lost.
byke, hive.
eldritch, unearthly.
cour, fold, bow.
fyke, fuss.
open, begin to bark.
fairin, reward.
hotch'd, jerked, hitched.
herds, herders.

Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane of the brig;
There, at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross;
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake;
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle —
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain gray tail:
The carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son take heed:
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty sarks run in your mind,
Think! ye may buy the joys o'er dear;
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

Robert Burns

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID, OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS

1786

O ye wha are sae guid yoursel,
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neibour's fauts and folly!
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supply'd wi' store o' water,

brig, bridge.
ettle, intention.
fient, devil.
claught, clawed.

The heapet happer's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter, —

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals,
That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door
For glaiket Folly's portals;
I for their thoughtless, careless sakes
Would here propone defences —
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compar'd,
And shudder at the niffer;
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What maks the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasion gave,
That purity ye pride in,
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hidin'.

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop,
What ragings must his veins convulse
That still eternal gallop:
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It maks an unco leeway.

See Social Life and Glee sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,

heapet happer, heaped hopper.
douce, grave.
niffer, exchange.
lave, rest.
glaiket, giddy.
differ, difference.
baith, both.
core, company.
donsie, unlucky.
aft, oft.
unco, wonderful.

Till, quite transmogrify'd, they're grown
  Debauchery and Drinking:
O would they stay to calculate
  Th' eternal consequences;
Or — your more dreaded hell to state —
  Damnation of expenses!

Ye high, exalted, virtuous Dames,
  Tied up in godly laces,
Before you gie poor Frailty names,
  Suppose a change o' cases:
A dear lov'd lad, convenience snug,
  A treacherous inclination —
But, let me whisper i' your lug,
  Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother man,
  Still gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang,
  To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark,
  The moving Why they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark,
  How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
  Decidedly can try us,
He knows each chord, its various tone,
  Each spring, its various bias:
Then at the balance, let's be mute,
  We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly can compute,
  But know not what's resisted.

Robert Burns

transmogrify'd, metamorphosed.
aiblins, perhaps.
lug, ear.
kennin, trifle.

AULD LANG SYNE

1788

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne?

We twa hae rin about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd monie a weary fit
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,
Frae mornin' sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne.

And here's a hand, my trusty fiere,
And gie's a hand o' thine;
And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught
For auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

Robert Burns

JOHN ANDERSON, MY JO

1788

John Anderson, my jo, John,
When we were first acquent,

gowans, daisies. *fit*, foot.
dine, dinner-time. *fiere*, comrade.
guid-willie waught, draught of good-will. *jo*, sweetheart.

Your locks were like the raven,
  Your bonnie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
  Your locks are like the snow;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
  John Anderson, my jo!

John Anderson, my jo, John,
  We clamb the hill thegither;
And monie a canty day, John,
  We've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
  But hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
  John Anderson, my jo.

Robert Burns

THE BANKS O' DOON

c. 1791

Ye flowery banks o' bonnie Doon,
  How can ye blume sae fair!
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
  And I sae fu' o' care!

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
  That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
  When my fause luve was true.

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
  That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
  And wistna o' my fate.

brent, smooth. *beld*, bald. *pow*, pate.

Aft hae I roved by bonnie Doon,
To see the woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Upon a morn in June;
And sae I flourish'd on the morn,
And sae was pu'd or' noon.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Upon its thorny tree;
But my fause luver staw my rose,
And left the thorn wi' me.

Robert Burns

DUNCAN GRAY

1792

Duncan Gray came here to woo,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
On blythe Yule night when we were fou',
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Maggie coost her head fu hiegh,
Look't asklent and unco skiegh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abiegh;
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

Duncan fleeched, and Duncan pray'd;
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

staw, stole. *fou'*, full. *asklent*, aside.
unco skiegh, wondrous shy. *gart*, made.
abiegh, off. *fleech'd*, flattered.

Duncan sigh'd baith out an in,
Grat his een baith bleer'd and blin',
Spak o' lowpin owre a linn;
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

Time and chance are but a tide,
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Slighted love is sair to bide,
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
"Shall I, like a fool," quoth he,
"For a haughty hizzie die?
She may gae to — France for me!"
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

How it comes let doctors tell,
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Meg grew sick as he grew hale,
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Something in her bosom wrings,
For relief a sigh she brings;
And O! her een, they spak sic things!
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

Duncan was a lad o' grace,
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Maggie's was a piteous case,
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Duncan could na be her death,
Swelling pity smoor'd his wrath;
Now they're crouse and cantie baith;
  Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

Robert Burns

grat, wept. *een*, eyes. *bleer'd*, bleared.
lowpin, leaping. *linn*, waterfall.
sair to bide, hard to endure. *hizzie*, hussy.
smoor'd, smothered. *crouse and canty*, bright and happy.

FOR A' THAT

1794

Is there for honest poverty,
  That hangs his head, an' a' that;
The coward slave — we pass him by,
  We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
  Our toils obscure an' a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
  The Man's the gowd for a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
  Wear hodden grey, an' a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
  A Man's a Man for a' that:
For a' that, an' a' that,
  Their tinsel show, and a' that,
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
  Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie ca'd a lord,
  Wha struts, and stares, an' a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
  He's but a coof for a' that:
For a' that, an' a' that,
  His ribband, star, an' a' that:
The man o' independent mind,
  He looks an' laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
  A marquis, duke, an' a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
  Guid faith, he maunna fa' that!

gowd, gold. *hodden grey*, coarse, undyed woollen cloth.
birkie, a young "sport." *coof*, lout, fool. *fa'*, try.

For a' that, an' a' that,
Their dignities an' a' that;
The pith o' sense, an' pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
(As come it will for a' that),
That Sense and Worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree, an' a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's coming yet, for a' that,
That Man to Man, the warld o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.

Robert Burns

A RED, RED ROSE

1794

O, my luve is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June:
O, my luve is like a melodie
That's sweetly played in tune.

As fair thou art, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

gree, prize.

And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee well a while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

Robert Burns

O, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST

1796

O, wert thou in the cauld blast
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee.
Or did misfortune's bitter storms,
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch of the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, with thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

Robert Burns

SONG

1783

My silks and fine array,
My smiles and languished air,
By love are driven away;
And mournful lean Despair

bield, shelter.

Brings me yew to deck my grave:
Such end true lovers have.

His face is fair as heaven
When springing buds unfold;
O, why to him was't given,
Whose heart is wintry cold?
His breast is love's all-worshipped tomb,
Where all love's pilgrims come.

Bring me an axe and spade,
Bring me a winding-sheet;
When I my grave have made,
Let winds and tempest beat:
Then down I'll lie, as cold as clay.
True love doth pass away!

William Blake

LAUGHING SONG

1789

When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it;

When the meadows laugh with lively green,
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene;
When Mary, and Susan, and Emily
With their sweet round mouths sing, "Ha, ha, he!"

When the painted birds laugh in the shade,
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread:
Come live, and be merry, and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of "Ha, ha, he!"

William Blake

NIGHT

1789

The sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine;
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine.
  The moon like a flower
  In heaven's high bower,
  With silent delight,
  Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy grove,
Where flocks have ta'en delight.
Where lambs have nibbled, silent move
The feet of angels bright;
  Unseen, they pour blessing,
  And joy without ceasing,
  On each bud and blossom,
  And each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest
Where birds are covered warm;
They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them all from harm:
  If they see any weeping
  That should have been sleeping,
  They pour sleep on their head,
  And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey,
They pitying stand and weep,
Seeking to drive their thirst away
And keep them from the sheep.

But, if they rush dreadful,
The angels, most heedful,
Receive each mild spirit,
New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes
Shall flow with tears of gold:
And pitying the tender cries,
And walking round the fold:
Saying: "Wrath by His meekness,
And, by His health, sickness,
Are driven away
From our immortal day.

"And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
I can lie down and sleep,
Or think on Him who bore thy name,
Graze after thee, and weep.
For, washed in life's river,
My bright mane for ever
Shall shine like the gold,
As I guard o'er the fold."

William Blake

THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER

1794

A little black thing among the snow,
Crying, "Weep! weep!" in notes of woe!
"Where are thy father and mother? Say!" —
"They are both gone up to the church to pray.

"Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smiled among the winter's snow,
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

"And because I am happy and dance and sing,
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise God and his priest and king,
Who make up a heaven of our misery."

William Blake

TIGER

1794

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see?
Did He who made the Lamb make thee?

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

William Blake

THE TWO SONGS

1794

I heard an Angel singing
When the day was springing:
"Mercy, pity, and peace,
Are the world's release."

So he sang all day
Over the new-mown hay,
Till the sun went down,
And haycocks looked brown.

I heard a devil curse
Over the heath and the furse:
"Mercy could be no more
If there were nobody poor,
And pity no more could be
If all were happy as ye:
And mutual fear brings peace,
Misery's increase
Are mercy, pity, peace."

At his curse the sun went down,
And the heavens gave a frown.

William Blake

LOVE'S SECRET

1794

Never seek to tell thy love,
  Love that never told can be;
For the gentle wind doth move
  Silently, invisibly.

I told my love, I told my love,
  I told her all my heart,
Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears.
  Ah! she did depart!

Soon after she was gone from me,
  A traveller came by,
Silently, invisibly:
  He took her with a sigh.

William Blake

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

IN SEVEN PARTS

1797–98

PART I

An ancient Mariner meeteth three Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.

1. It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

2. "The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

3. He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, gray-beard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

The Wedding-Guest is spellbound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

4. He holds him with his glittering eye —
The wedding-guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

5. The wedding-guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

6. "The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

7. "The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather till it reached the Line.

8. "Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon —"
The wedding-guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

9. The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

10. The wedding-guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;

And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner:

The ship driven by a storm toward the south pole.

11. "And now the storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

12. "With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

13. "And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold;
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald;

The land of ice, and of fearful sounds where no living thing was to be seen.

14. "And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken —
The ice was all between.

15. "The ice was here, the ice was
there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and
roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

16. "At length did cross an Alba-
tross:
Thorough the fog it came:
As if it had been a Christian
soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

Till a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality.

17. "It ate the food it ne'er had
eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-
fit;
The helmsman steered us
through!

18. "And a good south wind sprung
up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

And lo! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward through fog and floating ice.

19. "In mist or cloud, on mast or
shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through
fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-
shine."

The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.

20. "God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus! —
Why look'st thou so?" —
"With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross!"

Part II

1. "The sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

2. "And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner for killing the bird of good luck.

3. "And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe;
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay
That made the breeze to blow!

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.

4. "Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious sun uprist:

Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

5. "The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free:
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line.

6. "Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

7. "All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the moon.

8. "Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

9. "Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

10. "The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

11. "About, about, in reel and rout,
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white.

A Spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels.

12. "And some in dreams assured were
Of the spirit that plagued us so:
Nine fathom deep he had followed us,
From the land of mist and snow.

13. "And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

The shipmates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner: in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

14. "Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

Part III

1. "There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.

A weary time! A weary time!
How glazed each weary eye!
When looking westward I beheld
A something in the sky.

The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.

2. "At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist:
It moved and moved, and took
at last
A certain shape, I wist.

3. "A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and
veered.

4. "With throats unslaked, with
black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb
we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, 'A sail! a sail!'

At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.

5. "With throats unslaked, with
black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew
in,
As they were drinking all.

A flash of joy;

6. "'See! see (I cried) she tacks no
more!
Hither to work us weal;

And horror follows. For can it be a ship that comes onward without wind or tide?

Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!'

7. "The western wave was all a-flame:
The day was well nigh done:
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the sun.

It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship.

8. "And straight the sun was flecked with bars
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon grate he peered,
With broad and burning face.

9. "Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the sun,
Like restless gossameres?

And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting sun.

10. "Are those her ribs through which the sun
Did peer, as through a grate?

The Spectre-Woman and her Death-mate, and no other on board the skeleton-ship.

And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate?

Like vessel, like crew!

11. "Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The nightmare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

Death and Life-in-Death have diced for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.

12. "The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won, I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

No twilight within the courts of the sun.

13. "The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

At the rising of the moon,

14. "We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornèd moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

One after another,

15. "One after one, by the star-dogged moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

His shipmates drop down dead.

16. "Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner.

17. "The souls did from their bodies fly, —
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my crossbow!"

Part IV

The Wedding-Guest feareth that a spirit is talking to him;

1. "I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

2. "I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown." —

But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.

"Fear not, fear not, thou wedding-guest!
This body dropt not down.

3. "Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!

And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

4. "The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy
things
Lived on; and so did I.

He despiseth the creatures of the calm,

5. "I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

And envieth that they should live, and so many be dead.

6. "I looked to heaven, and tried
to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and
made
My heart as dry as dust.

7. "I closed my lids, and kept
them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the
sea and the sky,
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

8. "The cold sweat melted from
their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked
on me
Had never passed away.

But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men.

9. "An orphan's curse would drag
to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw
that curse,
And yet I could not die.

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected; and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

10. "The moving moon went up the
sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside —

11. "Her beams bemocked the sultry
main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge
shadow lay,
The charmèd water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

By the light of the moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.

12. "Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining
white,
And when they reared, the elfish
light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

13. "Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet
black,

They coiled and swam; and every
track
Was a flash of golden fire.

14. "O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware!
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

Their beauty and their happiness.

He blesseth them in his heart.

15. "The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

The spell begins to break.

Part V

1. "O sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

2. "The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

By grace of the Holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.

3. "My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

4. "I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light — almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

He heareth sounds and seeth strange sights and commotions in the sky and the element.

5. "And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

6. "The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about;
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

7. "And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
The moon was at its edge.

8. "The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

9. "The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the moon
The dead men gave a groan.

The bodies of the ship's crew are inspired, and the ship moves on;

10. "They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

11. "The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up-blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do:
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools —
We were a ghastly crew.

12. "The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:

The body and I pulled at one
rope,
But he said nought to me."

13. "I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'Twas not those souls that fled
in pain,
Which to their corses came
again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

But not by the souls of the men, nor by demons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.

14. "For when it dawned — they
dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through
their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

15. "Around, around, flew each
sweet sound,
Then darted to the sun;
Slowly the sounds came back
again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

16. "Sometimes a-dropping from the
sky
I heard the skylark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that
are,
How they seemed to fill the sea
and air
With their sweet jargoning!

17. "And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

18. "It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

19. "Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

20. "Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid; and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The lonesome Spirit from the south pole carries on the ship as far as the Line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.

21. "The sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean;
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion —

Backwards and forwards half her
length,
With a short uneasy motion.

22. "Then like a pawing horse let
go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

The Polar Spirit's fellow-demons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong, and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

23. "How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard, and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

24. "'Is it he?' quoth one, 'is this
the man?
By Him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full
low
The harmless Albatross.

25. "'The spirit who bideth by him-
self
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the
man
Who shot him with his bow.'

26. "The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, 'The man hath pen-
ance done,
And penance more will do.

Part VI

First Voice

1. "'But tell me, tell me! speak
again,
Thy soft response renewing —
What makes that ship drive on
so fast?
What is the ocean doing?'

Second Voice

2. "'Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most si-
lently
Up to the moon is cast —

3. "'If he may know which way to
go;
For she guides him, smooth or
grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.'

First Voice

4. "'But why drives on that ship so
fast,
Without or wave or wind?'

The Mariner hath been cast into a trance; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure.

Second Voice

"'The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

5. "'Fly, brother, fly! more high,
more high!
Or we shall be belated:

For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.

6. "I woke, and we were sailing on,
As in a gentle weather:
'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

7. "All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the moon did glitter.

8. "The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

The curse is finally expiated.

9. "And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen —

10. "Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round, walks on,

And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

11. "But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

12. "It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring —
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

13. "Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze —
On me alone it blew.

14. "Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country.

15. "We drifted o'er the harbor-bar,
And I with sobs did pray —
'O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.'

16. "The harbor-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the moon.

17. "The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies.

18. "And the bay was white with silent light,
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colors came.

And appear in their own forms of light.

19. "A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck —
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

20. "Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

21. "This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!

They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light:

22. "This seraph-band, each waved
his hand,
No voice did they impart —
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

23. "But soon I heard the dash of
oars,
I heard the pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce
away,
And I saw a boat appear.

24. "The pilot, and the pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a
joy
The dead men could not blast.

25. "I saw a third — I heard his
voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash
away
The Albatross's blood.

Part VII

1. "This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.

The Hermit of the Wood,

How loudly his sweet voice he
rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

2. "He kneels at morn, and noon,
and eve —
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

3. "The skiff-boat neared: I heard
them talk,
'Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many
and fair,
That signal made but now?'

Approacheth the ship with wonder.

4. "'Strange, by my faith!' the
Hermit said —
'And they answered not our
cheer!
The planks looked warped! and
see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

5. "'Brown skeletons of leaves that
lag
My forest-brook along:
When the ivy-tod is heavy with
snow,
And the owlet whoops to the
wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

6. "'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish
look' —
(The pilot made reply)
'I am a-feared' — 'Push on,
push on!'
Said the Hermit cheerily.

7. "The boat came closer to the
ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the
ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

The ship suddenly sinketh.

8. "Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the
bay;
The ship went down like lead.

The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.

9. "Stunned by that loud and
dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven
days drowned,
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I
found
Within the pilot's boat.

10. "Upon the whirl, where sank the
ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

11. "I moved my lips — the pilot shrieked,
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

12. "I took the oars: the pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eye went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

13. "And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him; and the penance of life falls on him.

14. "'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say —
What manner of man art thou?'

15. "Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

16. "Since then at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns;
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land,

17. "I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

18. "What loud uproar bursts from that door:
The wedding-guests are there;
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are;
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

19. "O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemèd there to be.

20. "O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company! —

21. "To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

And to teach, by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth.

22. "Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

23. "He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

24. The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone; and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

25. He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

KUBLA KHAN

1798

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But O, that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedern cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced;
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion,
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reach'd the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:

And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
  Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
  From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

  A damsel with a dulcimer
    In a vision once I saw:
  It was an Abyssinian maid,
    And on her dulcimer she play'd,
  Singing of Mount Abora.
  Could I revive within me,
  Her symphony and song,
To such delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard would see them there,
And all would cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
  And close your eyes with holy dread,
  For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

1798

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure: —
But the least motion which they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

William Wordsworth

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR, JULY 13, 1798

1798

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur. — Once again

Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of a more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem,
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire
The hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration: — feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,

In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened: — that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on, —
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft —
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart —
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recollections dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,

Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all. — I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colors and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. — That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold

From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear, — both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest friend,
My dear, dear friend; and in thy love I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured

Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies: oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Shall be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance —
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence — wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love — oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods, and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

William Wordsworth

SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS

1799

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
  Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to praise
  And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
  Half hidden from the eye!
— Fair as a star, when only one
  Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

William Wordsworth

THREE YEARS SHE GREW IN SUN AND SHOWER

1799

Three years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the storm

Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake — The work was done —
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

William Wordsworth

A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL

1799

A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;

Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

William Wordsworth

LUCY GRAY

OR, SOLITUDE

1799

Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
— The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night —
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, father! will I gladly do:
'Tis scarcely afternoon —
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!"

At this the father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot-band;

He plied his work; — and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb:
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At daybreak on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept — and, turning homeward, cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet";
— When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone wall;

And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same;

They tracked them on — nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

— Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

William Wordsworth

THE RAINBOW

1802

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

William Wordsworth

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPTEMBER 3, 1802

1802

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor, valley, rock, and hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

William Wordsworth

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

1802

Once did She hold the gorgeous East in fee;
And was the safeguard of the West: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest child of Liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day:

Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great is passed away.

William Wordsworth

THE SOLITARY REAPER

1803

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In springtime from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas,
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings? —
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago;
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;

I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er her sickle bending; —
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

William Wordsworth

WINGS HAVE WE

1806

Wings have we, — and as far as we can go
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There I find personal themes, a plenteous store,
Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear;
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear, —
The gentle Lady married to the Moor;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

William Wordsworth (from Personal Talk)

ODE
INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

1803–06

I

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem

Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore; —
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday; —

Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd boy!

IV

Ye blessed Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye each to other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel — I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his mother's arm: —
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
— But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,

But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her inmate Man,
Forget the glories he has known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six-years' darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;

And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy soul's immensity;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the Eternal Deep,
Haunted forever by the Eternal Mind, —
Mighty prophet, seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our life to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a master o'er a slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast: —
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the Eternal Silence: truths that wake
To perish never:
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor man nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather

Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing, a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that in your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now forever taken from our sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forbode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,

Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

William Wordsworth

THE DAFFODILS

1804

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle in the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company:
I gazed — and gazed — but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with rapture fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

William Wordsworth

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

1806

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. — Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising fron the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

William Wordsworth

HOHENLINDEN

1802

On Linden, when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay th' untrodden snow,
And dark as winter was the flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

boon, gift.
The battle at Hohenlinden in Austria was fought in December, 1800, between the French ("Frank") and the Austrians ("Hun").

But Linden saw another sight,
When the drum beat at dead of night,
Commanding fires of death to light
The darkness of her scenery.

By torch and trumpet fast array'd,
Each horseman drew his battle-blade,
And furious every charger neigh'd,
To join the dreadful revelry.

Then shook the hills with thunder riven,
Then rush'd the steed to battle driven,
And louder than the bolts of heaven,
Far flashed the red artillery.

But redder yet that light shall glow
On Linden's hills of stained snow,
And bloodier yet the torrent flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

'Tis morn; but scarce yon level sun
Can pierce the war-clouds, rolling dun,
Where furious Frank and fiery Hun,
Shout in their sulphurous canopy.

The combat deepens. On, ye brave,
Who rush to glory, or the grave!
Wave, Munich! all thy banners wave,
And charge with all thy chivalry!

Few, few, shall part where many meet!
The snow shall be their winding-sheet,
And every turf beneath their feet
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre.

Thomas Campbell

POOR TOM BOWLING

Bef. 1814

Here, a sheer hulk, lies poor Tom Bowling,
The darling of our crew;
No more he'll hear the tempest howling,
For Death has broach'd him too.
His form was of the manliest beauty,
His heart was kind and soft;
Faithful below, he did his duty,
But now he's gone aloft.

Yet shall poor Tom find pleasant weather
When He, who all commands,
Shall give, to call life's crew together,
The word to pipe all hands.
Thus Death, who kings and tars despatches,
In vain Tom's life has doff'd;
For, though his body's under hatches,
His soul is gone aloft.

Charles Dibdin

THE SAILOR'S CONSOLATION

Date ?

One night came on a hurricane,
The sea was mountains rolling,
When Barney Buntline turned his quid,
And said to Billy Bowling:
"A strong nor'wester's blowing, Bill;
Hark! don't ye hear it roar now?
Lord help 'em, how I pities them
Unhappy folks on shore now!

"Foolhardy chaps who live in towns,
What danger they are all in,

And now lie quaking in their beds,
For fear the roof shall fall in:
Poor creatures! how they envies us,
And wishes, I've a notion,
For our good luck, in such a storm,
To be upon the ocean!

"And as for them who're out all day
On business from their houses,
And late at night are coming home,
To cheer their babes and spouses, —
While you and I, Bill, on the deck
Are comfortably lying,
My eyes! what tiles and chimney-pots
About their heads are flying!

"And very often have we heard
How men are killed and undone
By overturns of carriages,
By thieves and fires in London.
We know what risks all landsmen run,
From noblemen to tailors;
Then, Bill, let us thank Providence
That you and I are sailors."

William Pitt
Master attendant at Jamaica Dockyard, died 1840
(*ascribed to Charles Dibdin*)

ROSE AYLMER

1806

Ah, what avails the sceptred race,
Ah, what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and of sighs
I consecrate to thee.

Walter Savage Landor

LYRICS AND EPIGRAMS

I

1831

Mild is the parting year, and sweet
The odor of the falling spray;
Life passes on more rudely fleet,
And balmless is its closing day.
I wait its close, I court its gloom,
And mourn that never must there fall
Or on my breast or on my tomb
The tear that would have sooth'd it all.

II

1831

Past ruin'd Ilion Helen lives,
Alcestis rises from the shades;
Verse calls them forth; 'tis verse that gives
Immortal youth to mortal maids.

Soon shall Oblivion's deepening veil
Hide all the peopled hills you see,
The gay, the proud, while lovers hail
These many summers you and me.

III

1846

Your pleasures spring like daisies in the grass,
Cut down, and up again as blithe as ever;

From you, Ianthe, little troubles pass
Like little ripples down a sunny river.

IV

1836

Stand close around, ye Stygian set,
With Dirce in one boat conveyed,
Or Charon, seeing, may forget
That he is old, and she a shade.

V

1846

Proud word you never spoke, but you will speak
Four not exempt from pride some future day:
Resting on one white hand a warm wet cheek
Over my open volume you will say,
"This man loved *me!*" then rise and trip away.

VI

1846

Is it not better at an early hour
In its calm cell to rest the weary head,
While birds are singing and while blooms the bower,
Than sit the fire out and go starv'd to bed?

VII

1853

Death stands above me, whispering low
I know not what into my ear:
Of his strange language all I know
Is, there is not one word of fear.

VIII

1853

I strove with none; for none was worth my strife,
Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art;

I warmed both hands before the fire of life,
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

IX

1853

God scatters beauty as he scatters flowers
O'er the wide earth, and tells us all are ours.
A hundred lights in every temple burn,
And at each shrine I bend my knee in turn.

X

1858

Friends! hear the words my wandering thoughts would say,
And cast them into shape some other day.
Southey, my friend of forty years, is gone,
And, shattered by the fall, I stand alone.

Walter Savage Landor

NO LONGER COULD I DOUBT HIM TRUE

1846

Mother, I cannot mind my wheel,
My fingers ache, my lips are dry:
O! if you felt the pain I feel!
But oh, who ever felt as I?
No longer could I doubt him true —
All other men may use deceit;
He always said my eyes were blue,
And often swore my lips were sweet.

Walter Savage Landor

THE HAMADRYAD

1846

Rhaicos was born amid the hills wherefrom
Gnidos the light of Caria is discern'd,
And small are the white-crested that play near,
And smaller onward are the purple waves.
Thence festal choirs were visible, all crown'd
With rose and myrtle if they were inborn;
If from Pandion sprang they, on the coast
Where stern Athene raised her citadel,
Then olive was intwined with violets
Cluster'd in bosses, regular and large.
For various men wore various coronals;
But one was their devotion; 'twas to her
Whose laws all follow, her whose smile withdraws
The sword from Ares, thunderbolt from Zeus,
And whom in his chill cave the mutable
Of mind, Poseidon, the sea-king, reveres,
And whom his brother, stubborn Dis, hath pray'd
To turn in pity the averted cheek
Of her he bore away, with promises,
Nay, with loud oath before dread Styx itself,
To give her daily more and sweeter flowers
Than he made drop from her on Enna's dell.

Rhaicos was looking from his father's door
At the long trains that hastened to the town
From all the valleys like bright rivulets
Gurgling with gladness, wave outrunning wave,
And thought it hard he might not also go
And offer up one prayer, and press one hand,
He knew not whose. The father call'd him in,
And said, "Son Rhaicos! those are idle games;
Long enough I have lived to find them so."

And ere he ended sighed, as old men do
Always, to think how idle such games are.
"I have not yet," thought Rhaicos in his heart,
And wanted proof.
"Suppose thou go and help
Echeion at the hill, to bark yon oak
And lop its branches off, before we delve
About the trunk and ply the root with axe:
This we may do in winter."
Rhaicos went;
For thence he could see farther, and see more
Of those who hurried to the city-gate.
Echeion he found there with naked arm
Swart-hair'd, strong-sinew'd, and his eyes intent
Upon the place where first the axe should fall:
He held it upright. "There are bees about,
Or wasps, or hornets," said the cautious eld,
"Look sharp, O son of Thallinos!" The youth
Inclined his ear, afar, and warily,
And cavern'd in his hand. He heard a buzz
At first, and then the sound grew soft and clear,
And then divided into what seem'd tune,
And there were words upon it, plaintive words.
He turn'd, and said, "Echeion! do not strike
That tree: it must be hollow; for some god
Speaks from within. Come thyself near." Again
Both turn'd toward it: and behold! there sat
Upon the moss below, with her two palms
Pressing it, on each side, a maid in form.
Downcast were her long eyelashes, and pale
Her cheek, but never mountain-ash display'd
Berries of color like her lip so pure,
Nor were the anemones about her hair
Soft, smooth, and wavering like the face beneath.
"What dost thou here?" Echeion, half-afraid,

Half-angry cried. She lifted up her eyes,
But nothing spake she. Rhaicos drew one step
Backward, for fear came likewise over him,
But not such fear: he panted, gasp'd, drew in
His breath, and would have turn'd it into words,
But could not into one.
"O send away
That sad old man!" said she. The old man went
Without a warning from his master's son,
Glad to escape, for sorely he now fear'd.
And the axe shone behind him in their eyes.
Hamad. And wouldst thou too shed the most
innocent
Of blood? No vow demands it; no god wills
The oak to bleed.
Rhaicos. Who art thou? whence? why here?
And whither wouldst thou go? Among the robed
In white or saffron, or the hue that most
Resembles dawn or the clear sky, is none
Array'd as thou art. What so beautiful
As that gray robe which clings about thee close,
Like moss to stones adhering, leaves to trees,
Yet lets thy bosom rise and fall in turn,
As, touch'd by zephyrs, fall and rise the boughs
Of graceful platan by the river-side?
Hamad. Lovest thou well thy father's house?
Rhaicos. Indeed
I love it, well I love it, yet would leave
For thine, where'er it be, my father's house,
With all the marks upon the door, that show
My growth at every birthday since the third,
And all the charms, o'erpowering evil eyes,
My mother nail'd for me against my bed,
And the Cydonian bow (which thou shalt see)
Won in my race last spring from Eutychos.

Hamad. Bethink thee what it is to leave a home
Thou never yet hast left, one night, one day.
Rhaicos. No, 'tis not hard to leave it; 'tis not hard
To leave, O maiden, that paternal home,
If there be one on earth whom we may love
First, last, forever; one who says that she
Will love forever too. To say which word,
Only to say it, surely is enough —
It shows such kindness — if 'twere possible
We at the moment think she would indeed.
Hamad. Who taught thee all this folly at thy age?
Rhaicos. I have seen lovers and have learn'd to love.
Hamad. But wilt thou spare the tree?
Rhaicos. My father wants
The bark; the tree may hold its place awhile.
Hamad. Awhile! thy father numbers then my days?
Rhaicos. Are there no others where the moss beneath
Is quite as tufty? Who would send thee forth
Or ask thee where thou tarriest? Is thy flock
Anywhere near?
Hamad. I have no flock: I kill
Nothing that breathes, that stirs, that feels the air,
The sun, the dew. Why should the beautiful
(And thou art beautiful) disturb the source
Whence springs all beauty? Hast thou never heard
Of Hamadryads?
Rhaicos. Heard of them I have:
Tell me some tale about them. May I sit
Beside thy feet? Art thou not tired? The herbs
Are very soft; I will not come too nigh;
Do but sit there, nor tremble so, nor doubt.
Stay, stay an instant: let me first explore

If any acorn of last year be left
Within it; thy thin robe too ill protects
Thy dainty limbs against the harm one small
Acorn may do. Here's none. Another day
Trust me; till then let me sit opposite.
Hamad. I seat me; be thou seated, and content.
Rhaicos. O sight for gods! ye men below! adore
The Aphrodite. *Is* she there below?
Or sits she here before me, as she sate
Before the shepherd on those heights that shade
The Hellespont, and brought his kindred woe?
Hamad. Reverence the higher Powers; nor deem amiss
Of her who pleads to thee, and would repay —
Ask not how much — but very much. Rise not;
No, Rhaicos, no! Without the nuptial vow
Love is unholy. Swear to me that none
Of mortal maids shall ever taste thy kiss,
Then take thou mine; then take it, not before.
Rhaicos. Hearken, all gods above! O Aphrodite!
O Herè! Let my vow be ratified!
But wilt thou come into my father's house?
Hamad. Nay; and of mine I cannot give thee part.
Rhaicos. Where is it?
Hamad. In this oak.
Rhaicos. Ay; now begins
The tale of Hamadryad; tell it through.
Hamad. Pray of thy father never to cut down
My tree; and promise him, as well thou mayst,
That every year he shall receive from me
More honey than will buy him nine fat sheep,
More wax than he will burn to all the gods.
Why fallest thou upon thy face? Some thorn
May scratch it, rash young man! Rise up; for shame!
Rhaicos. For shame I can not rise. O pity me!

I dare not sue for love — but do not hate!
Let me once more behold thee — not once more,
But many days: let me love on — unloved!
I aimed too high: on my head the bolt
Falls back, and pierces to the very brain.
Hamad. Go — rather go, than make me say I love.
Rhaicos. If happiness is immortality,
(And whence enjoy it else the gods above?)
I am immortal too: my vow is heard:
Hark! on the left — Nay, turn not from me now.
I claim my kiss.
Hamad. Do men take first, then claim?
Do thus the seasons run their course with them?

Her lips were sealed, her head sank on his breast.
'Tis said that laughs were heard within the wood:
But who should hear them? — and whose laughs?
and why?

Savory was the smell, and long past noon,
Thallinos! in thy house: for marjoram,
Basil and mint, and thyme and rosemary,
Were sprinkled on the kid's well roasted length,
Awaiting Rhaicos. Home he came at last,
Not hungry, but pretending hunger keen,
With head and eyes just o'er the maple plate.
"Thou seest but badly, coming from the sun,
Boy Rhaicos!" said the father. "That oak's bark
Must have been tough, with little sap between;
It ought to run; but it and I are old."
Rhaicos, although each morsel of the bread
Increas'd by chewing, and the meat grew cold
And tasteless on his palate, took a draught
Of gold-bright wine, which, thirsty as he was,
He thought not of until his father fill'd

The cup, averring water was amiss,
But wine had been at all times pour'd on kid, —
It was religion.
He thus fortified
Said, not quite boldly, and not quite abash'd,
"Father, that oak is Zeus's own: that oak
Year after year will bring thee wealth from wax
And honey. There is one who fears the gods
And the gods love — that one." (He blush'd, nor said
What one) "Has promis'd this, and may do more.
Thou hast not many moons to wait until
The bees have done their best; if then there come
Nor wax nor honey, let the tree be hewn."
"Zeus hath bestow'd on thee a prudent mind,"
Said the glad sire; "but look thou often there,
And gather all the honey thou canst find
In every crevice, over and above
What has been promis'd; would they reckon that?"

Rhaicos went daily; but the nymph as oft
Invisible. To play at love, she knew,
Stopping its breathings when it breathes most soft,
Is sweeter than to play on any pipe.
She play'd on his: she fed upon his sighs;
They pleas'd her when they gently waved her hair,
Cooling the pulses of her purple veins,
And when her absence brought them out, they pleased.
Even among the fondest of them all,
What mortal or immortal maid is more
Content with giving happiness than pain?
One day he was returning from the wood
Despondently. She pitied him, and said
"Come back!" and twined her fingers in the hem
Above his shoulder. Then she led his steps
To a cool rill that ran o'er level sand

Through lentisk and through oleander, there
Bathed she his feet, lifting them on her lap
When bathed, and drying them in both her hands.
He dared complain; for those who most are loved
Most dare it; but not harsh was his complaint.
"O thou inconstant!" said he, "if stern law
Bind thee, or will, stronger than sternest law,
O, let me know henceforward when to hope
The fruit of love that grows for me but here."
He spake; and pluck'd it from its pliant stem.
"Impatient Rhaicos! Why thus intercept
The answer I would give? There is a bee
Whom I have fed, a bee who knows my thoughts
And executes my wishes: I will send
That messenger. If ever thou art false,
Drawn by another, own it not, but drive
My bee away; then shall I know my fate,
And — for thou must be wretched — weep at thine.
But often as my heart persuades to lay
Its cares on thine and throb itself to rest,
Expect her with thee, whether it be morn
Or eve, at any time when woods are safe."

Day after day the Hours beheld them blest,
And season after season: years had past,
Blest were they still. He who asserts that Love
Ever is sated of sweet things, the same
Sweet things he fretted for in earlier days,
Never, by Zeus! loved he a Hamadryad.
The night had now grown longer, and perhaps
The Hamadryads find them lone and dull
Among their woods; one did, alas! She called
Her faithful bee: 'twas when all bees should sleep,
And all did sleep but hers. She was sent forth
To bring that light which never wintry blast

Blows out, nor rain nor snow extinguishes,
The light that shines from loving eyes upon
Eyes that love back, till they can see no more.

Rhaicos was sitting at his father's hearth:
Between them stood the table, not o'erspread
With fruits which autumn now profusely bore,
Nor anise cakes, nor odorous wine; but there
The draft-board was expanded; at which game
Triumphant sat old Thallinos; the son
Was puzzled, vex'd, discomfited, distraught.
A buzz was at his ear: up went his hand,
And it was heard no longer. The poor bee
Return'd (but not until the morn shone bright)
And found the Hamadryad with her head
Upon her aching wrist, and showed one wing
Half-broken off, the other's meshes marr'd,
And there were bruises which no eye could see
Saving a Hamadryad's.
At this sight
Down fell the languid brow, both hands fell down,
A shriek was carried to the ancient hall
Of Thallinos: he heard it not: his son
Heard it, and ran forthwith into the wood.
No bark was on the tree, no leaf was green,
The trunk was riven through. From that day forth
Nor word nor whisper sooth'd his ear, nor sound
Even of insect wing; but loud laments
The woodmen and the shepherds one long year
Heard day and night; for Rhaicos would not quit
The solitary place, but moan'd and died.
Hence milk and honey wonder not, O guest,
To find set duly on the hollow stone.

Walter Savage Landor

LOCHINVAR

1806

O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west!
Through all the wide Border his steed is the best;
And save his good broadsword he weapons had none;
He rode all unarmed, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stayed not for brake, and he stopped not for stone;
He swam the Eske river where ford there was none;
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late:
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,
Among bride's men and kinsmen, and brothers, and all.
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word):
"O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"

"I long wooed your daughter; my suit you denied;
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide;
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar."

brake, thicket.

The bride kissed the goblet; the knight took it up,
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar —
"Now tread we a measure!" said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;
And the bride-maidens whispered, "'Twere better by far
To have matched our fair cousin with young Lochinvar."

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reached the hall-door, and the charger stood near;
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
"She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur!
They'll have fleet steeds that follow!" quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Graemes of the Netherby clan;
Fosters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran;
There was racing and chasing, on Canobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.

galliard, a lively dance. *scaur*, rock.

So daring in love and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

Sir Walter Scott (in Marmion)

WHERE SHALL THE LOVER REST

1806

Where shall the lover rest,
Whom the fates sever
From the true maiden's breast,
Parted forever?
Where, through groves deep and high,
Sounds the far billow,
Where early violets die,
Under the willow.

Eleu loro. Soft shall be his pillow.

There through the summer day,
Cool streams are laving;
There, while the tempests sway,
Scarce are boughs waving;
There thy rest shalt thou take,
Parted forever,
Never again to wake,
Never, O never!

Eleu loro. Never, O never!

Where shall the traitor rest,
He the deceiver,
Who could win maiden's breast,
Ruin and leave her?
In the lost battle,
Borne down by the flying,

Where mingles war's rattle
With groans of the dying.

Eleu, loro. There shall he be lying.

Her wing shall the eagle flap
O'er the false-hearted:
His warm blood the wolf shall lap,
Ere life be parted.
Shame and dishonor sit
By his grave ever;
Blessing shall hallow it, —
Never, O never!

Eleu loro. Never, O never!

Sir Walter Scott (in Marmion)

GATHERING SONG OF DONALD THE BLACK

1816

Pibroch of Donuil Dhu,
Pibroch of Donuil,
Wake thy wild voice anew,
Summon Clan-Conuil.
Come away, come away,
Hark to the summons!
Come in your war array,
Gentles and commons.

Come from deep glen, and
From mountain so rocky,
The war-pipe and pennon
Are at Inverlochy.
Come every hill-plaid, and
True heart that wears one,

Come every steel blade, and
  Strong hand that bears one.

Leave untended the herd,
  The flock without shelter;
Leave the corpse uninterr'd,
  The bride at the altar;
Leave the deer, leave the steer,
  Leave nets and barges:
Come with your fighting-gear,
  Broadswords and targes.

Come as the winds come, when
  Forests are rended,
Come as the waves come, when
  Navies are stranded:
Faster come, faster come,
  Faster and faster,
Chief, vassal, page, and groom,
  Tenant and master.

Fast they come, fast they come;
  See how they gather!
Wide waves the eagle plume,
  Blended with heather.
Cast your plaids, draw your blades,
  Forward, each man, set!
Pibroch of Donuil Dhu,
  Knell for the onset!

Sir Walter Scott

PROUD MAISIE

1818

Proud Maisie is in the wood,
  Walking so early;

Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
Singing so rarely.

"Tell me, thou bonny bird,
When shall I marry me?"
"When six braw gentlemen,
Kirkward shall carry ye."

"Who makes the bridal bed,
Birdie, say truly?" —
"The gray-headed sexton
Who delves the grave duly.

"The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
Shall light thee steady.
The owl from the steeple sing,
'Welcome, proud lady.'"

Sir Walter Scott (*from The Heart of Midlothian*)

ONE CROWDED HOUR

Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
To all the sensual world proclaim:
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.

Major Mordaunt (*used as a motto in Scott's Old Mortality*)

THE RUINS OF ATHENS

1810

Ancient of days! august Athena! where,
Where are thy men of might? thy grand in soul?
Gone — glimmering through the dream of things that were:

First in the race that led to Glory's goal,
They won, and passed away — is this the whole?
A schoolboy's tale, the wonder of an hour!
The Warrior's weapon and the Sophist's stole
Are sought in vain, and o'er each mouldering tower,
Dim with the mist of years, gray flits the shade of power.

Lord Byron (*in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*)

THE RUINS OF ROME

1818

Oh, Rome! my Country! City of the Soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
Lone Mother of dead Empires! and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery.
What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
The cypress — hear the owl — and plod your way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples — Ye!
Whose agonies are evils of a day —
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
An empty urn within her withered hands,
Whose holy dust was scattered long ago;
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

The Goth, the Christian — Time — War — Flood, and Fire,
Have dealt upon the seven-hilled City's pride;

She saw her glories star by star expire,
And up the steep barbarian Monarchs ride,
Where the car climbed the Capitol; far and wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a site: —
Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, "here was, or is," where all is doubly
night? . . .

Alas! the lofty city! and, alas,
The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass
The Conqueror's sword in bearing fame away!
Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
And Livy's pictured page! — but these shall be
Her resurrection; all beside — decay.
Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see
That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was
free!

Lord Byron (in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage)

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

1814

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;

Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, so eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

Lord Byron (*in Hebrew Melodies*)

SONG OF THE GREEK POET

1819–20

The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

The Scian and the Teian muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse;
Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' "Islands of the Blest."

The mountains look on Marathon —
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I'd dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

The Scian and the Teian Muse. Homer and Anacreon.

A king sate on the rocky brow
  Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
  And men in nations; — all were his!
He counted them at break of day —
And when the sun set where were they?

And where were they? and where art thou,
  My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now —
  The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
  Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
  Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush — for Greece a tear.

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest?
  Must *we* but blush? — Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
  A remnant of thy Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ!

What, silent still? and silent all?
  Ah! me; — the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
  And answer, "Let one living head,
But one arise, — we come, we come!"
'Tis but the living who are dumb.

A king, Xerxes.

In vain — in vain; strike other chords;
  Fill high the cup of Samian wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
  And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
Hark, rising to the ignoble call —
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet;
  Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
  The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave —
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
  We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine:
  He served — but served Polycrates —
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

The tyrant of the Chersonese
  Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
  Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
  On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
  Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

Trust not for freedom to the Franks —
They have a king who buys and sells;
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells;
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade —
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die;
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine —
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

Lord Byron (in Don Juan)

HESPERUS

c. 1820

Oh, Hesperus! thou bringest all good things —
Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,
To the young bird the parent's brooding wings,
The welcome stall to the o'erlabored steer;
Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone clings,
Whate'er our household gods protect of dear,
Are gathered round us by thy look of rest;
Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's breast.

Lord Byron (in Don Juan)

AT THE MID HOUR OF NIGHT

1813

At the mid hour of night when stars are weeping, I fly
To the lone vale we loved, when life shone warm in thine eye;
And I think oft, if spirits can steal from the regions of air
To revisit past scenes of delight, thou wilt come to me there
And tell me our love is remembered, even in the sky!

Then I sing the wild song it once was rapture to hear,
When our voices, commingling, breathed like one on the ear;
And as Echo far off through the vale my sad orison rolls,
I think, O my Love! 'tis thy voice, from the Kingdom of Souls
Faintly answering still the notes that once were so dear.

Thomas Moore

OZYMANDIAS

1817

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that the sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:

Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

Percy Bysshe Shelley

VICTORY

1820

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent; —
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great, and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory!

Percy Bysshe Shelley (in Prometheus Unbound)

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

1819

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Titan, Prometheus.

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear! oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay
Lulled by the coil of his crystàlline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers,
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Percy Bysshe Shelley

TO A SKYLARK

1820

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad day-light
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we know that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-wingèd thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine;
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine:

Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?

What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be —
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest — but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound —
Better than all treasures
That in books are found —
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then — as I am listening now.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

THE CLOUD

1820

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noon-day dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder, —
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;

Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
  Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
  The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
  Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
  And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
  When the morning star shines dead,
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
  Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
  In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
  Its ardors of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
  From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
  As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
  Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
  By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
  Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
  The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
  Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
  Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,

Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-colored bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when, with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

chair, chariot.

SONG

1820

Rarely, rarely, comest thou,
  Spirit of Delight!
Wherefore hast thou left me now
  Many a day and night?
Many a weary night and day
'Tis since thou art fled away.

How shall ever one like me
  Win thee back again?
With the joyous and the free
  Thou wilt scoff at pain.
Spirit false! thou hast forgot
All but those who need thee not.

As a lizard in the shade
  Of a trembling leaf,
Thou with sorrow art dismayed;
  Even the sighs of grief
Reproach thee, that thou art so near,
And reproach thou wilt not hear.

Let me set my mournful ditty
  To a merry measure;
Thou wilt never come for pity,
  Thou wilt come for pleasure;
Pity then will cut away
Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

I love all that thou lovest,
  Spirit of Delight!
The fresh Earth in new leaves dressed,
  And the starry night;

Autumn evening, and the morn
When the golden mists are born.

I love snow, and all the forms
  Of the radiant frost;
I love waves, and winds, and storms,
  Everything almost
Which is Nature's, and may be
Untainted by man's misery.

I love tranquil solitude,
  And such society
As is quiet, wise, and good;
  Between thee and me
What difference? but thou dost possess
The things I seek, not love them less.

I love Love — though he has wings,
  And like light can flee,
But above all other things,
  Spirit, I love thee —
Thou art love and life! Oh, come,
Make once more my heart thy home.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

A LAMENT

1821

O world! O life! O time!
On whose last steps I climb,
  Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
  No more — oh, never more!

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;

Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more — oh, never more!

Percy Bysshe Shelley

LINES

1822

When the lamp is shattered,
The light in the dust lies dead;
When the cloud is scattered,
The rainbow's glory is shed;
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remembered not;
When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music and splendor
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute: —
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When hearts have once mingled,
Love first leaves the well-built nest;
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possessed.
O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

Its passions shall rock thee,
As the storms rock the ravens on high;
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

WINTER

1822

A widow bird sate mourning for her love
Upon a wintry bough;
The frozen wind crept on above,
The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare,
No flower upon the ground,
And little motion in the air
Except the mill-wheel's sound.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

1815

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific — and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

John Keats

WHEN I HAVE FEARS

1817

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
Before high piled books, in charact'ry,
Hold like rich garners the full-ripen'd grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love! — then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

John Keats

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

1819

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:

What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal — yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! That cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu:
And, happy melodist, unwearièd,
Forever piping songs forever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
Forever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
Forever panting, and forever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,

Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair Attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou sayst,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty," — that is all,
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

John Keats

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

1819

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness, —
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!

O for a beaker full of the warm South,
  Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
    With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
      And purple-stained mouth;
  That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
    And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget,
  What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
  Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last, gray hairs,
  Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and
      dies;
    Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
      And leaden-eyed despairs,
  Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
    Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
  Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
  Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
  And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
    Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
      But here there is no light,
  Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
    Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy
      ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
  Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,

pards, leopards. *viewless*, invisible.

But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain —
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!

Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she was feigned to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music: — Do I wake or sleep?

John Keats

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

1819

"Oh, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

"Oh, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

"I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too."

"I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful — a faery's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

"I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;

She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

"I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.

"She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew;
And sure in language strange she said —
'I love thee true.'

"She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept, and sigh'd full sore;
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four.

"And there she lullèd me asleep;
And there I dream'd — Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill's side.

"I saw pale kings and princes too —
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried — 'La belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!'

"I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gapèd wide;
And I awoke, and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

"And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,

Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing."

John Keats

TO AUTUMN

1819

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel-shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, —
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

John Keats

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

1819

St. Agnes' Eve — Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor;
But no — already had his deathbell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and sung;
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' eve:
Another way he went and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carved angels, ever eager-ey'd,
Star'd where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting faerily
The brain, newstuff'd in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,

And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by — she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retir'd; not cool'd by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere:
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallow'd hour was near at hand: she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwink'd with faery fancy; all amort,
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,

But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss — in sooth such things have been.

He ventures in: let no buzz'd whisper tell:
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland:
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;
"They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race!

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand;
"He had a fever late, and in the fit
"He cursèd thee and thine, both house and land:
"Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
"More tame for his grey hairs — Alas me! flit!
"Flit like a ghost away." — "Ah, Gossip dear,
"We're safe enough; here in this armchair sit,

"And tell me how" — "Good Saints not here,
not here:
"Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy
bier."

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,
And as she mutter'd "Well-a-well-a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
"Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
"When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve —
"Yet men will murder upon holy days:
"Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
"And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
"To venture so: it fills me with amaze
"To see thee, Porphyro! — St. Agnes' Eve!
"God's help! my lady fair the conjurer plays
"This very night: good angels her deceive!
"But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to
grieve."

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth clos'd a wondrous riddle-book,
As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
"A cruel man and impious thou art:
"Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
"Alone with her good angels, far apart
"From wicked men like thee. Go, go! — I deem,
"Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"
Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace
"When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
"If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
"Or look with ruffian passion in her face;
"Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
" Or I will, even in a moment's space,
"Awake, with a horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
"And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves and bears."

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
"A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,
"Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
"Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
"Were never miss'd." — Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legioned fairies paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:
"All cates and dainties shall be stored there
"Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame
"Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
"For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
"On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
"Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
"The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
"Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
The dame return'd and whisper'd in his ear
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmèd maid,

Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turned, and down the aged gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove frayed and fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No uttered syllable, or woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

A casement high and triple-arched there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together press'd,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,

And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seemed a splendid angel, newly dress'd,
Save wings, for heaven: Porphyro grew faint:
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathèd pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmèd jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees;
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in seaweed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppressed
Her soothèd limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
Blissfully havened both from joy and pain;
Clasped like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listened to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breathed himself: then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hushed carpet, silent, stepped,
And 'tween the curtains peeped, where, lo! how fast
she slept.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half-anguished, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet: —
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarinet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone: —
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
While he forth from the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez; and spicèd dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

These delicates he heap'd with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathèd silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retirèd quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfumed light —
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
"Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
"Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
"Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervèd arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains: — 'twas a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as icèd stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;

Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seem'd he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in woofèd phantasies.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute, —
Tumultuous, — and, in chords that tenderest be,
He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence call'd, "La belle dame sans mercy":
Close to her ear touching the melody; —
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan:
He ceas'd — she panted quick — and suddenly
Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured-stone.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep;
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh,
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
Who knelt, with joinèd hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
"Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
"Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
"And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:
"How chang'd thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
"Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
"Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!

"Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
"For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where
to go."

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet, —
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath
set.

'Tis dark; quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'Tis dark: the icèd gusts still rave and beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
"Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine. —
"Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
"I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
"Though thou forsakest a deceivèd thing; —
'A dove forlorn and lost with sick unprunèd wing."

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
"Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
"Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and vermeil
dy'd?
"Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
"After so many hours of toil and quest,
"A famish'd pilgrim, — sav'd by miracle.
"Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
"Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
"To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

"Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land,
"Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
"Arise — arise! the morning is at hand; —
"The bloated wassailers will never heed: —
"Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
"There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see, —
"Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:
"Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
"For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears —
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found. —
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide;
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide: —
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones; —
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,

And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitched, with meagre face deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

John Keats

THE WAR SONG OF DINAS VAWR

1829

The mountain sheep are sweeter,
But the valley sheep are fatter;
We therefore deemed it meeter
To carry off the latter.
We made an expedition;
We met an host and quelled it;
We forced a strong position
And killed the men who held it.

On Dyfed's richest valley,
Where herds of kine were browsing,
We made a mighty sally,
To furnish our carousing.
Fierce warriors rushed to meet us;
We met them, and o'erthrew them:
They struggled hard to beat us,
But we conquered them, and slew them.

As we drove our prize at leisure,
The king marched forth to catch us:
His rage surpassed all measure,
But his people could not match us.
He fled to his hall-pillars;
And, ere our force we led off,

Some sacked his house and cellars,
While others cut his head off.

We there, in strife bewildering,
Spilt blood enough to swim in:
We orphaned many children
And widowed many women.
The eagles and the ravens
We glutted with our foemen:
The heroes and the cravens,
The spearmen and the bowmen.

We brought away from battle,
And much their land bemoaned them,
Two thousand head of cattle
And the head of him who owned them:
Ednyfed, King of Dyfed,
His head was borne before us;
His wine and beasts supplied our feasts,
And his overthrow, our chorus.

Thomas Love Peacock (*in The Misfortunes of Elphin*)

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS

1844

One more Unfortunate,
  Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
  Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,
  Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
  Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements;
Whilst the wave constantly
  Drips from her clothing;
Take her up instantly,
  Loving, not loathing.

Touch her not scornfully;
Think of her mournfully,
  Gently and humanly,
Not of the stains of her;
All that remains of her
  Now is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
  Rash and undutiful:
Past all dishonor,

Death has left on her
  Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
  One of Eve's family·
Wipe those poor lips of hers
  Oozing so clammily.

Loop up her tresses
  Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses;
Whilst wonderment guesses
  Where was her home?

Who was her father?
  Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
  Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
  Yet, than all other?

Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
  Under the sun!
Oh, it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
  Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly,
  Feelings had changed:
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence;
Even God's providence
  Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver;
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river:
Mad from life's history
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurled —
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world!

In she plunged boldly —
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran —
Over the brink of it,
Picture it — think of it,
Dissolute Man!
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently, kindly,

Smooth and compose them;
And her eyes, close them,
  Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring
  Through muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing
  Fixed on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
Spurred by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
  Into her rest. —
Cross her hands humbly,
As if praying dumbly,
  Over her breast!

Owning her weakness,
  Her evil behavior,
And leaving with meekness
  Her sins to her Savior!

Thomas Hood

SIBERIA

Ref. 1849

In Siberia's wastes
  The ice-wind's breath
Woundeth like the toothèd steel.
Lost Siberia doth reveal
  Only blight and death.

Blight and death alone.
  No summer shines.

Night is interblent with day.
In Siberia's wastes alway
  The blood thickens, the heart pines.

In Siberia's wastes
  No tears are shed,
For they freeze within the brain.
Nought is felt but dullest pain,
  Pain acute, yet dead;

Pain as in a dream,
  When years go by
Funeral-paced, yet fugitive —
When man lives and doth not live,
  Doth not live — nor die.

In Siberia's wastes
  Are sands and rocks.
Nothing blooms of green or soft,
But the snow-peaks rise aloft
  And the gaunt ice-blocks.

And the exile there
  Is one with those;
They are part, and he is part,
For the sands are in his heart,
  And the killing snows.

Therefore in those wastes
  None curse the Czar;
Each man's tongue is cloven by
The North Blast, who heweth nigh
  With sharp scimitar.

And such doom each drees,
Till, hunger-gnawn
And cold-slain, he at length sinks there,
Yet scarce more a corpse than ere
His last breath was drawn.

James Clarence Mangan

A JACOBITE'S EPITAPH

c. 1825

To my true king I offer'd free from stain
Courage and faith; vain faith, and courage vain.
For him I threw lands, honors, wealth, away,
And one dear hope, that was more prized than they.
For him I languish'd in a foreign clime,
Gray-hair'd with sorrow in my manhood's prime;
Heard on Lavernia Scargill's whispering trees,
And pined by Arno for my lovelier Tees;
Beheld each night my home in fever'd sleep,
Each morning started from the dream to weep;
Till God, who saw me tried too sorely, gave
The resting-place I ask'd, an early grave.
O thou, whom chance leads to this nameless stone,
From that proud country which was once mine own,
By those white cliffs I never more must see,
By that dear language which I spake like thee,
Forget all feuds, and shed one English tear
O'er English dust. A broken heart lies here.

Thomas Babington Macaulay

THE FAIRY THORN

AN ULSTER BALLAD

1836

"Get up, our Anna dear, from the weary spinning-wheel;
For your father's on the hill, and your mother is asleep;

Come up above the crags, and we'll dance the Highland reel
Around the fairy thorn on the steep."

At Anna Grace's door't was thus the maidens cried,
Three merry maidens fair in kirtles of the green;
And Anna laid the *rock* and the weary wheel aside —
The fairest of the four, I ween.

They're glancing through the glimmer of the quiet eve,
Away in milky wavings of neck and ankle bare;
The heavy-sliding stream in its sleepy song they leave,
And the crags in the ghostly air;

And linking hand in hand, and singing as they go,
The maids along the hillside have ta'en their fearless way,
Till they come to where the rowan trees in lonely beauty grow
Beside the Fairy Hawthorn grey.

The Hawthorn stands between the ashes tall and slim,
Like matron with her twin grand-daughters at her knee;
The rowan berries cluster o'er her low head grey and dim
In ruddy kisses sweet to see.

The merry maidens four have ranged them in a row,
Between each lovely couple a stately rowan stem,
And away in mazes wavy, like skimming birds they go —
Oh, never carolled bird like them!

rock, distaff. *rowan*, mountain ash.

But solemn is the silence of the silvery haze
That drinks away their voices in echoless repose,
And dreamily the evening has stilled the haunted braes,
And dreamier the gloaming grows.

And sinking one by one, like lark-notes from the sky
When the falcon's shadow saileth across the open shaw,
Are hushed the maidens' voices, as cowering down they lie
In the flutter of their sudden awe.

For, from the air above and the grassy ground beneath,
And from the mountain-ashes and the old White-thorn between
A power of faint enchantment doth through their beings breathe
And they sink down together on the green.

They sink together silent, and, stealing side to side,
They fling their lovely arms o'er their drooping necks so fair;
Then vainly strive again their naked arms to hide,
For their shrinking necks again are bare.

Thus clasped and prostrate all, with their heads together bowed,
Soft o'er their bosoms beating — the only human sound —
They hear the silky footsteps of the silent fairy crowd,
Like a river in the air gliding round.

shaw. thicket, copse.

Nor scream can any raise, nor prayer can any say,
But wild, wild the terror of the speechless three;
For they feel fair Anna Grace drawn silently away —
By whom, they dare not look to see.

They feel their tresses twine within her parting locks of gold,
And the curls elastic falling, as her head withdraws;
They feel her sliding arms from their trancèd arms unfold,
But they dare not look to see the cause:

For heavy on their senses the faint enchantment lies
Through all that night of anguish and perilous amaze;
And neither fear nor wonder can ope their quivering eyes,
Or their limbs from the cold ground raise,

Till out of Night the Earth has rolled her dewy side,
With every haunted mountain and streamy vale below;
When, as the mist dissolves in the yellow morning-tide,
The maidens' trance dissolveth so.

Then fly the ghastly three as swiftly as they may,
And tell their tale of sorrow to anxious friends in vain —
They pined away and died within the year and day,
And ne'er was Anna Grace seen again.

Sir Samuel Fergusson

A SONG OF THE PHŒNIX

c. 1835

O blest unfabled Incense Tree,
That burns in glorious Araby,
With red scent chalicing the air,
Till earth-life grow Elysian there!

Half buried to her flaming breast
In this bright tree, she makes her nest,
Hundred-sunned Phœnix! when she must
Crumble at length to hoary dust!

Her gorgeous death-bed! her rich pyre
Burnt up with aromatic fire!
Her urn, sight high from spoiler men!
Her birthplace when self-born again!

The mountainless green wilds among,
Here ends she her unechoing song!
With amber tears and odorous sighs
Mourned by the desert where she dies!

George Darley

CONCORD HYMN

SUNG AT THE COMPLETION OF THE BATTLE MONUMENT
JULY 4, 1837

1837

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;

And Time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream that seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
We set to-day a votive stone;
That memory may their deed redeem,
When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare
To die, and leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and thee.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

THE HUMBLE-BEE

1837

Burly, dozing humble-bee,
Where thou art is clime for me.
Let them sail for Porto Rique,
Far-off heats through seas to seek;
I will follow thee alone,
Thou animated torrid-zone!
Zigzag steerer, desert cheerer,
Let me chase thy waving lines;
Keep me nearer, me thy hearer,
Singing over shrubs and vines.

Insect lover of the sun;
Joy of thy dominion!
Sailor of the atmosphere;
Swimmer through the waves of air;
Voyager of light and noon;
Epicurean of June;

Wait, I prithee, till I come
Within earshot of thy hum, —
All without is martyrdom.

When the south wind, in May days,
With a net of shining haze
Silvers the horizon wall,
And with softness touching all,
Tints the human countenance
With a color of romance,
And infusing subtle heats,
Turns the sod to violets,
Thou, in sunny solitudes,
Rover of the underwoods,
The green silence dost displace
With thy mellow, breezy bass.

Hot midsummer's petted crone,
Sweet to me thy drowsy tone
Tells of countless sunny hours,
Long days, and solid banks of flowers;
Of gulfs of sweetness without bound
In Indian wildernesses found;
Of Syrian peace, immortal leisure,
Firmest cheer, and birdlike pleasure.

Aught unsavory or unclean
Hath my insect never seen;
But violets and bilberry bells,
Maple-sap and daffodels,
Grass with green flag half-mast high,
Succory to match the sky,
Columbine with horn of honey,
Scented fern, and agrimony,

Clover, catchfly, adder's-tongue,
And brier-roses, dwelt among;
All beside was unknown waste,
All was picture as he passed.

Wiser far than human seer,
Yellow-breeched philosopher!
Seeing only what is fair,
Sipping only what is sweet,
Thou dost mock at fate and care,
Leave the chaff, and take the wheat.
When the fierce northwestern blast
Cools sea and land so far and fast,
Thou already slumberest deep;
Woe and want thou canst outsleep;
Want and woe, which torture us,
Thy sleep makes ridiculous.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

DAYS

1851

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.
I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

BRAHMA

1857

If the red slayer think he slays,
  Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
  I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;
  Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanish'd gods to me appear;
  And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
  When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
  And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
  And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
  Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

QUATRAINS

I

Date (?)

Teach me your mood, O patient stars!
  Who climb each night the ancient sky,
Leaving on space no shade, no scars,
  No trace of age, no fear to die.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (*Fragments*)

Seven, the sons of the gods.

II

1863

So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, *Thou must*,
The youth replies, *I can*.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (from Voluntaries)

THE CITY IN THE SEA

1831

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently —
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free —
Up domes — up spires — up kingly halls —
Up fanes — up Babylon-like walls —
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers —
Up many and many a marvellous shrine
Whose wreathèd friezes interwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.

Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye —
Not the gayly-jewelled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed;
For no ripples curl, alas!
Along that wilderness of glass —
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea —
No heavings hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene.

But lo, a stir in the air!
The wave — there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide —
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven.
The waves have now a redder glow —
The hours are breathing faint and low —
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

Edgar Allan Poe

THE HAUNTED PALACE

1839

In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace —
Radiant palace — reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion —
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair!

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow,
(This — all this — was in the olden
Time long ago),
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A winged odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,
Through two luminous windows, saw
Spirits moving musically,
To a lute's well-tuned law,
Round about a throne where, sitting,
(Porphyrogene!)
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing
And sparkling evermore,

Porphyrogene, born in the purple, legitimately royal.

A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate.
(Ah, let us mourn! — for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed,
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

And travellers, now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms, that move fantastically
To a discordant melody,
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever
And laugh — but smile no more.

Edgar Allan Poe (in The Fall of the House of Usher)

TO THE FRINGED GENTIAN

1829

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew,
And colored with the heaven's own blue,
That openest when the quiet light
Succeeds the keen and frosty night:

Thou comest not when violets lean
O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frosts and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue — blue — as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart.

William Cullen Bryant

THE BATTLE-FIELD

1837

Once this soft turf, this rivulet's sands,
  Were trampled by a hurrying crowd,
And fiery hearts and armed hands
  Encountered in the battle-cloud.

Ah! never shall the land forget
  How gushed the life-blood of her brave —
Gushed warm with hope and courage yet,
  Upon the soil they fought to save.

Now all is calm, and fresh, and still;
  Alone the chirp of flitting bird,
And talk of children on the hill,
  And bell of wandering kine, are heard.

No solemn host goes trailing by
  The black-mouthed gun and staggering wain;

Men start not at the battle-cry,
  Oh, be it never heard again!

Soon rested those who fought; but thou
  Who minglest in the harder strife
For truths which men receive not now,
  Thy warfare only ends with life.

A friendless warfare! lingering long
  Through weary day and weary year,
A wild and many-weaponed throng
  Hang on thy front, and flank, and rear.

Yet nerve thy spirit to the proof,
  And blench not at thy chosen lot.
The timid good may stand aloof,
  The sage may frown — yet faint thou not.

Nor heed the shaft too surely cast,
  The foul and hissing bolt of scorn;
For with thy side shall dwell, at last,
  The victory of endurance born.

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again,
  Th' eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
  And dies among his worshippers.

Yea, though thou lie upon the dust,
  When they who helped thee flee in fear,
Die full of hope and manly trust,
  Like those who fell in battle here.

Another hand thy sword shall wield,
  Another hand the standard wave,

Till from the trumpet's mouth is pealed
The blast of triumph o'er thy grave.

William Cullen Bryant

ABRAHAM DAVENPORT

1866

In the old days (a custom laid aside
With breeches and cocked hats) the people sent
Their wisest men to make the public laws.
And so, from a brown homestead, where the Sound
Drinks the small tribute of the Mianas,
Waved over by the woods of Rippowams,
And hallowed by pure lives and tranquil deaths,
Stamford sent up to the councils of the State
Wisdom and grace in Abraham Davenport.

'Twas on a May-day of the far old year
Seventeen hundred eighty, that there fell
Over the bloom and sweet life of the Spring,
Over the fresh earth and the heaven of noon,
A horror of great darkness, like the night
In day of which the Norland sagas tell, —
The Twilight of the Gods. The low-hung sky
Was black with ominous clouds, save where its rim
Was fringed with a dull glow, like that which climbs
The crater's sides from the red hell below.
Birds ceased to sing, and all the barnyard fowls
Roosted; the cattle at the pasture bars
Lowed and looked homeward; bats on leathern wings
Flitted abroad; the sounds of labor died;
Men prayed and women wept; all ears grew sharp
To hear the doom-blast of the trumpet shatter
The black sky, that the dreadful face of Christ
Might look from the rent clouds, not as He looked

A loving guest at Bethany, but stern
As Justice and inexorable Law.

Meanwhile in the old State House, dim as ghosts
Sat the lawgivers of Connecticut,
Trembling beneath their legislative robes.
"It is the Lord's Great Day! Let us adjourn,"
Some said; and then, as if with one accord,
All eyes were turned to Abraham Davenport.
He rose, slow cleaving with his steady voice
The intolerable hush. "This well may be
The Day of Judgment which the world awaits;
But be it so or not, I only know
My present duty, and my Lord's command
To occupy till He come. So at the post
Where He hath set me in His providence,
I choose, for one, to meet Him face to face, —
No faithless servant frightened from my task,
But ready when the Lord of the harvest calls;
And therefore, with all reverence, I would say,
Let God do His work, we will see to ours.
Bring in the candles." And they brought them in.

Then by the flaring lights the Speaker read,
Albeit with husky voice and shaking hands,
An act to amend an act to regulate
The shad and alewive fisheries. Whereupon
Wisely and well spoke Abraham Davenport,
Straight to the question, with no figures of speech
Save the ten Arab signs, yet not without
The shrewd dry humor natural to the man:
His awestruck colleagues listening all the while
Between the pauses of his argument,
To hear the thunder of the wrath of God
Break from the hollow trumpet of the cloud.

And there he stands in memory to this day,
Erect, self-poised, a rugged face, half seen
Against the background of unnatural dark,
A witness to the ages as they pass,
That simple duty hath no place for fear.

John Greenleaf Whittier

THE WRECK OF THE HESPERUS

1839

It was the schooner Hesperus,
That sailed the wintry sea;
And the skipper had taken his little daughter,
To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax,
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds,
That ope in the month of May.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,
His pipe was in his mouth,
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow
The smoke now West, now South.

Then up and spake an old Sailor,
Had sailed the Spanish Main,
"I pray thee, put into yonder port,
For I fear a hurricane.

"Last night the moon had a golden ring,
And to-night no moon we see!"
The skipper, he blew a whiff from his pipe,
And a scornful laugh laughed he.

Colder and louder blew the wind,
A gale from the Northeast,
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm, and smote amain
The vessel in its strength;
She shuddered and paused, like a frighted steed,
Then leaped her cable's length.

"Come hither! come hither! my little daughter,
And do not tremble so;
For I can weather the roughest gale
That ever wind did blow."

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat
Against the stinging blast;
He cut a rope from a broken spar,
And bound her to the mast.

"O father! I hear the church-bells ring,
Oh say, what may it be?"
"'Tis a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast!"
And he steered for the open sea.

"O father! I hear the sound of guns,
Oh say, what may it be?"
"Some ship in distress, that cannot live
In such an angry sea!"

"O father! I see a gleaming light,
Oh say, what may it be?"
But the father answered never a word,
A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,
With his face turned to the skies,
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
That savèd she might be;
And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave,
On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear,
Through the whistling sleet and snow,
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept
Tow'rds the reef of Norman's Woe.

And ever the fitful gusts between
A sound came from the land;
It was the sound of the trampling surf
On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows,
She drifted a dreary wreck,
And a whooping billow swept the crew
Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves
Looked soft as carded wool,
But the cruel rocks, they gored her side
Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
With the masts went by the board;
Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank,
Ho! ho! the breakers roared!

At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach,
A fisherman stood aghast,
To see the form of a maiden fair,
Lashed close to a drifting mast.

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
The salt tears in her eyes;
And he saw her hair, like the brown seaweed,
On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,
In the midnight and the snow!
Christ save us all from a death like this,
On the reef of Norman's Woe!

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

NATURE

1876

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Nor wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which, though more splendid, may not please him more;
So Nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

CHAUCER

1873

An old man in a lodge within a park;
The chamber walls depicted all around
With portraitures of huntsmen, hawk, and hound,
And the hurt deer. He listeneth to the lark,
Whose song comes with the sunshine through the dark
Of painted glass in leaden lattice bound;
He listeneth and he laugheth at the sound,
Then writeth in a book like any clerk.
He is the poet of the dawn, who wrote
The Canterbury Tales, and his old age
Made beautiful with song; and as I read
I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note
Of lark and linnet, and from every page
Rise odors of ploughed field or flowery mead.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

ON A BUST OF DANTE

1841

See, from this counterfeit of him
Whom Arno shall remember long,
How stern of lineament, how grim,
The father was of Tuscan song:
There but the burning sense of wrong,
Perpetual care and scorn, abide;
Small friendship for the lordly throng;
Distrust of all the world beside.

Faithful if this wan image be,
No dream his life was, — but a fight;
Could any Beatricè see
A lover in this anchorite?

To that cold Ghibelline's gloomy sight
  Who could have guessed the visions came
Of Beauty, veiled with heavenly light,
  In circles of eternal flame?

The lips as Cumæ's cavern close,
  The cheeks with fast and sorrow thin,
The rigid front, almost morose,
  But for the patient hope within,
Declare a life whose course hath been
  Unsullied still, though still severe,
Which, through the wavering days of sin,
  Kept itself icy-chaste and clear.

Not wholly such his haggard look
  When wandering once, forlorn, he strayed,
With no companion save his book,
  To Corvo's hushed monastic shade;
Where, as the Benedictine laid
  His palm upon the convent's guest,
The single boon for which he prayed
  Was peace, that pilgrim's one request.

Peace dwells not here, — this rugged face
  Betrays no spirit of repose;
The sullen warrior sole we trace,
  The marble man of many woes.
Such was his mien when first arose
  The thought of that strange tale divine,
When hell he peopled with his foes,
  The scourge of many a guilty line.

War to the last he waged with all
  The tyrant canker-worms of earth;

Baron and duke, in hold and hall,
  Cursed the dark hour that gave him birth;
He used Rome's harlot for his mirth;
  Plucked bare hypocrisy and crime;
But valiant souls of knightly worth
  Transmitted to the rolls of Time.

O Time! whose verdicts mock our own,
  The only righteous judge art thou;
That poor old exile, sad and lone,
  Is Latium's other Virgil now:
Before his name the nations bow;
  His words are parcel of mankind,
Deep in whose hearts, as on his brow,
  The marks have sunk of Dante's mind.

Thomas William Parsons

RONDEAU

1838

Jenny kissed me when we met,
  Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
  Sweets into your list, put that in:
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
  Say that health and wealth have missed me,
Say I'm growing old, but add,
  Jenny kissed me.

Leigh Hunt

THE OLD NAVY

Bef. 1848

The captain stood on the carronade: "First lieutenant," says he,
"Send all my merry men aft here, for they must list to me;

I haven't the gift of the gab, my sons — because I'm
bred to the sea;
That ship there is a Frenchman, who means to fight
with we.
And odds bobs, hammer and tongs, long as I've
been to sea,
I've fought 'gainst every odds — but I've gain'd
the victory!

"That ship there is a Frenchman, and if we don't
take she,
'Tis a thousand bullets to one, that she will capture
we;
I haven't the gift of the gab, my boys; so each man to
his gun;
If she's not mine in half an hour, I'll flog each
mother's son.
For odds bobs, hammer and tongs, long as I've
been to sea,
I've fought 'gainst every odds — and I've gain'd
the victory!"

We fought for twenty minutes, when the Frenchman
had enough;
"I little thought," said he, "that your men were of
such stuff";
Our captain took the Frenchman's sword, a low bow
made to he;
"I haven't the gift of the gab, monsieur, but polite I
wish to be.
And odds bobs, hammer and tongs, long as I've
been to sea,
I've fought 'gainst every odds — and I've gain'd
the victory!"

Our captain sent for all of us: "My merry men," said he,
"I haven't the gift of the gab, my lads, but yet I thankful be:
You've done your duty handsomely, each man stood to his gun;
If you hadn't, you villians, as sure as day, I'd have flogg'd each mother's son,
For odds bobs, hammer and tongs, as long as I'm at sea,
I'll fight 'gainst every odds — and I'll gain the victory!"

Frederick Marryat

LITTLE BILLEE

1849

There were three sailors of Bristol city
Who took a boat and went to sea.
But first with beef and captain's biscuits
And pickled pork they loaded she.

There was gorging Jack and guzzling Jimmy,
And the youngest he was little Billee.
Now when they got as far as the Equator
They'd nothing left but one split pea.

Says gorging Jack to guzzling Jimmy,
"I am extremely hungaree."
To gorging Jack says guzzling Jimmy,
"We've nothing left, us must eat we."

Says gorging Jack to guzzling Jimmy,
"With one another we shouldn't agree!
There's little Bill, he's young and tender,
We're old and tough, so let's eat he."

"Oh! Billy, we're going to kill and eat you,
So undo the button of your chemie."
When Bill received this information
He used his pocket handkerchie.

"First let me say my catechism,
Which my poor mammy taught to me."
"Make haste, make haste," says guzzling Jimmy,
While Jack pulled out his snickersnee.

So Billy went up to the main-top gallant mast,
And down he fell on his bended knee.
He scarce had come to the twelfth commandment
When up he jumps. "There's land I see:

"Jerusalem and Madagascar,
And North and South Amerikee:
There's the British flag a-riding at anchor,
With Admiral Napier, K.C.B."

So when they got aboard the Admiral's
He hanged fat Jack and flogged Jimmee:
But as for little Bill he made him
The Captain of a Seventy-three.

William Makepeace Thackeray

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

1832, 1842

Part I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the field the road runs by
To many-towered Camelot;

K.C.B., *i.e.* Knight Commander of the Bath.

And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled,
Slide the heavy barges trailed
By slow horses; and unhailed
The shallop flitteth silken-sailed
Skimming down to Camelot;
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to towered Camelot;
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

Part II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot;
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-haired page in crimson clad,
Goes by to towered Camelot;
And sometimes through the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often through the silent nights

A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot;
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling through the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneeled,
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot;
And from his blazoned baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jeweled shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot;
As often through the purple night,

Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror cracked from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

Part IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over towered Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance —
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right —
The leaves upon her falling light —
Through the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot;
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turned to towered Camelot.
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot;
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

ULYSSES

1842

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Matched with an agèd wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vexed the dim sea. I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known, — cities of men,
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honored of them all, —
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,

Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
Forever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
As though to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
  This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle —
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and through soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
  There lies the port: the vessel puffs her sail;
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought with me, —
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads, — you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil.

Death closes all; but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

SONG OF THE LOTOS-EATERS

1833, 1842

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.

Lotos-Eaters. See the *Odyssey*, IX.

Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!" —
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labor be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall, and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives

And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd change;
For surely now our household hearths are cold:
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labor unto agèd breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.
But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelids still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill —
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twinèd vine —
To watch the emerald-colored water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone

Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world:
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine, and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer — some, 'tis whisper'd — down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.

Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
O rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

MORTE D'ARTHUR

1833, 1842

So all day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonnesse about their Lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep — the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made, —
Though Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more — but let what will be, be;

Morte d'Arthur. See Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, bk. xxi, chap. v.

I am so deeply smitten through the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride; for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword — and how I rowed across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known.
But now delay not; take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere;
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word."
To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten through the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."
So saying, from the ruined shrine he stepped
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.
There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,

This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw; but at the last it seemed
Better to leave Excalibur concealed
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou performed my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseemed
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;
For surer sign had followed, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake;
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence;
But now much honor and much fame were lost."
So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.
Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."
To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widowed of the power in his eye
That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,

And the third time may prosper, get thee hence;
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutched the sword,
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirled in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur;
But ere he dipped the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the king.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not though I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I looked again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard.
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,

And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."
So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded through his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him through the place of tombs.
But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sighed the king,
Muttering, and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walked,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him, like a goad.
Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armèd heels —
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.
Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold — and from them
rose

A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.
Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"
And to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed his hands,
And called him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood; for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the withered moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dashed with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls —
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne — were parched with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shattered column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot through the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.
Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.

Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."
And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest — if indeed I go —
For all my mind is clouded with a doubt —
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly, but it lies
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

BUGLE SONG

1850

The splendor falls on castle walls,
And snowy summits, old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (from *the Princess*)

THE EAGLE

1851

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

MAUD

1855

Birds in the high Hall-garden
When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
They were crying and calling.

Where was Maud? in our wood;
And I, who else, was with her,
Gathering woodland lilies,
Myriads blow together.

Birds in our wood sang
Ringing thro' the valleys,
Maud is here, here, here
In among the lilies.

I kiss'd her slender hand,
She took the kiss sedately;
Maud is not seventeen,
But she is tall and stately.

I to cry out on pride
  Who have won her favor!
O Maud were sure of Heaven
  If lowliness could save her.

I know the way she went
  Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touch'd the meadows
  And left the daisies rosy.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
  Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?
  One is come to woo her.

Look, a horse at the door,
  And little King Charlie snarling,
Go back, my lord, across the moor,
  You are not her darling.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (from *Maud*)

THE STEAM THRESHING-MACHINE

Flush with the pond the lurid furnace burned
At eve, while smoke and vapor fill'd the yard;
The gloomy winter sky was dimly starr'd,
The fly-wheel with a mellow murmur turn'd;

While, ever rising on its mystic stair
In the dim light, from secret chambers borne,
The straw of harvest, sever'd from the corn,
Climb'd, and fell over, in the murky air.

I thought of mind and matter, will and law,
And then of him, who set his stately seal

him, i.e., Virgil (in the *Georgics*).

Of Roman words on all the forms he saw
Of old-world husbandry: I could but feel
With what a rich precision he would draw
The endless ladder, and the booming wheel!

Charles Tennyson-Turner

BOOT AND SADDLE

1842

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my Castle, before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery grey,
(*Chorus*) *Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say;
Many's the friend there, will listen and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay —
(*Chorus*) *Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*"

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array.
Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,
(*Chorus*) *Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*"

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay!
I've better counsellors; what counsel they?
(*Chorus*) *Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*"

Robert Browning

SOLILOQUY OF THE SPANISH CLOISTER

1842

Gr-r-r — there go, my heart's abhorrence!
Water your damned flower-pots, do!
If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,
God's blood, would not mine kill you!

What? your myrtle-bush wants trimming?
  Oh, that rose has prior claims —
Needs its leaden vase filled brimming?
  Hell dry you up with its flames!

At the meal we sit together:
  Salve tibi! I must hear
Wise talk of the kind of weather,
  Sort of season, time of year:
Not a plenteous cork-crop: scarcely
  Dare we hope oak-galls, I doubt:
What's the Latin name for "parsley"?
  What's the Greek name for Swine's Snout?

Whew! We'll have our platter burnished,
  Laid with care on our own shelf!
With a fire-new spoon we're furnished,
  And a goblet for ourself,
Rinsed like something sacrificial
  Ere 'tis fit to touch our chaps —
Marked with L. for our initial!
  (He-he! There his lily snaps!)

Saint, forsooth! While brown Dolores
  Squats outside the Convent bank,
With Sanchicha, telling stories,
  Steeping tresses in the tank,
Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horsehairs,
  — Can't I see his dead eye glow,
Bright as 'twere a Barbary corsair's?
  (That is, if he'd let it show!)

When he finishes refection,
  Knife and fork he never lays

oak-galls, used in making ink.

Cross-wise, to my recollection,
As I do, in Jesu's praise.
I, the Trinity illustrate,
Drinking watered orange-pulp —
In three sips the Arian frustrate;
While he drains his at one gulp!

Oh, those melons! If he's able
We're to have a feast; so nice!
One goes to the Abbot's table,
All of us get each a slice.
How go on your flowers? None double?
Not one fruit-sort can you spy?
Strange! — And I, too, at such trouble,
Keep them close-nipped on the sly!

There's a great text in Galatians,
Once you trip on it, entails
Twenty-nine distinct damnations,
One sure, if another fails:
If I trip him just a-dying,
Sure of Heaven as sure as can be,
Spin him round and send him flying
Off to Hell, a Manichee?

Or, my scrofulous French novel
On grey paper with blunt type!
Simply glance at it, you grovel
Hand and foot in Belial's gripe:
If I double down its pages
At the woeful sixteenth print,
When he gathers his greengages,
Ope a sieve and slip it in 't?

Or, there's Satan! — one might venture
Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave

Such a flaw in the indenture
As he'd miss till, past retrieve,
Blasted lay that rose-acacia
We're so proud of! Hy, Zy, Hine . . .
'St, there's Vespers! *Plena gratia*
Ave, Virgo! Gr-r-r — you swine!

Robert Browning

THE LABORATORY

(*Ancien régime*)

1844

Now that I, tying thy glass mask tightly,
May gaze thro' these faint smokes curling whitely,
As thou plyest thy trade in this devil's smithy —
Which is the poison to poison her prithee?

He is with her; and they know that I know
Where they are, what they do: they believe my tears flow
While they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled to the drear
Empty church to pray God in, for them! — I am here.

Grind away, moisten and mash up thy paste,
Pound at thy powder, — I am not in haste!
Better sit thus, and observe thy strange things,
Than go where men wait me and dance at the King's.

That, in the mortar — you call it a gum?
Ah, the brave tree whence such gold oozings come!
And yonder soft phial, the exquisite blue,
Sure to taste sweetly, — is that poison too?

Had I but all of them, thee and thy treasures,
What a wild crowd of invisible pleasures!
To carry pure death in an earring, a casket,
A signet, a fan-mount, a filigree-basket!

Soon, at the King's, a mere lozenge to give
And Pauline should have just thirty minutes to live!
But to light a pastille, and Elise, with her head
And her breast and her arms and her hands, should drop dead!

Quick — is it finished? The color's too grim!
Why not soft like the phial's, enticing and dim?
Let it brighten her drink, let her turn it and stir,
And try it and taste, ere she fix and prefer!

What a drop! She's not little, no minion like me —
That's why she ensnared him: this never will free
The soul from those masculine eyes, — say, "no!"
To that pulse's magnificent come-and-go.

For only last night, as they whispered, I brought
My own eyes to beat on her so, that I thought
Could I keep them one half minute fixed, she would fall,
Shrivelled; she fell not; yet this does it all!

Not that I bid you spare her the pain!
Let death be felt and the proof remain;
Brand, burn up, bite into its grace —
He is sure to remember her dying face!

Is it done? Take my mask off! Nay, be not morose;
It kills her, and this prevents seeing it close:

The delicate droplet, my whole fortune's fee —
If it hurts her, beside, can it ever hurt me?

Now, take all my jewels, gorge gold to your fill,
You may kiss me, old man, on my mouth if you will!
But brush this dust off me, lest horror it brings
Ere I know it — next moment I dance at the Kings!

Robert Browning

MY LAST DUCHESS

1842

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive: I call
That piece a wonder, now: Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Fra Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Fra Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps
Over my Lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat"; such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart . . . how shall I say? . . . too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er

She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace — all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men, — good; but thanked
Somehow . . . I know not how . . . as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech — (which I have not) — to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss
Or there exceed the mark" — and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
— E'en then would be some stooping, and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, Sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your Master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, Sir! Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me.

Robert Browning

HOME THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

1845

O, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England — now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossom'd pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops — at the bent spray's edge —
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
— Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

Robert Browning

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER

1855

I said — Then, dearest, since 'tis so,
Since now at length my fate I know,
Since nothing all my love avails,
Since all, my life seemed meant for, fails,
Since this was written and needs must be —
My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness!

Take back the hope you gave, — I claim
Only the memory of the same,
— And this beside, if you will not blame,
Your leave for one more last ride with me.

My mistress bent that brow of hers;
Those deep dark eyes, where pride demurs
When pity would be softening through,
Fixed me a breathing-while or two
With life or death in the balance: right!
The blood replenished me again;
My last thought was at least not vain:
I and my mistress, side by side
Shall be together, breathe and ride,
So one day more am I deified —
Who knows but the world may end to-night?

Hush! if you saw some western cloud
All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed
By many benedictions — sun's
And moon's and evening star's at once —
And so, you, looking and loving best,
Conscious grew, your passion drew
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,
Down on you, near and yet more near,
Till flesh must fade for heaven was here! —
Thus leant she and lingered — joy and fear!
Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out — a long-cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.
What need to strive with a life awry?

Had I said that, had I done this,
So might I gain, so might I miss.
Might she have loved me? just as well
She might have hated, — who can tell?
Where had I been now if the worst befell?
And here we are riding, she and I.

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?
Why, all men strive and who succeeds?
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,
Saw other regions, cities new,
As the world rushed by on either side.
I thought, — All labor, yet no less
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.
Look at the end of work, contrast
The petty Done, the Undone vast,
This Present of theirs with the hopeful Past!
I hoped she would love me: here we ride.

What hand and brain went ever paired?
What heart alike conceived and dared?
What act proved all its thought had been?
What will but felt the fleshly screen?
We ride and I see her bosom heave.
There's many a crown for who can reach.
Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!
The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
A soldier's doing! What atones?
They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones.
My riding is better, by their leave.

What does it all mean, poet? well,
Your brains beat into rhythm — you tell
What we felt only; you expressed
You hold things beautiful the best,

And pace them in rhyme so, side by side.
'Tis something, nay 'tis much — but then,
Have you yourself what's best for men?
Are you — poor, sick, old ere your time —
Nearer one whit your own sublime
Than we who have never turned a rhyme?
Sing, riding's a joy! For me, I ride.

And you, great sculptor — so, you gave
A score of years to Art, her slave,
And that's your Venus — whence we turn
To yonder girl that fords the burn!
You acquiesce, and shall I repine?
What, man of music, you, grown grey
With notes and nothing else to say,
Is this your sole praise from a friend,
"Greatly his opera's strains intend,
But in music we know how fashions end!"
I gave my youth — but we ride, in fine.

Who knows what's fit for us? Had fate
Proposed bliss here should sublimate
My being; had I signed the bond —
Still one must lead some life beyond,
— Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.
This foot once planted on the goal,
This glory-garland round my soul,
Could I descry such? Try and test!
I sink back shuddering from the quest —
Earth being so good, would Heaven seem best?
Now, Heaven and she are beyond this ride.

And yet — she has not spoke so long!
What if Heaven be that, fair and strong

At life's best, with our eyes upturned
Whither life's flower is first discerned,
We, fixed so, ever should so abide?
What if we still ride on, we two,
With life for ever old yet new,
Changed not in kind but in degree,
The instant made eternity, —
And Heaven just prove that I and she
Ride, ride together, for ever ride?

Robert Browning

HELEN SEEKS FOR HER BROTHERS AMONG THE ARMY OF THE GREEKS BEFORE TROY

P. 1847

Clearly the rest I behold of the dark-eyed sons of Achaia;
Known to me well are the faces of all; their names I remember;
Two, two only remain, whom I see not among the commanders,
Castor fleet in the car, — Polydeukes brave with the cestus, —
Own dear brethren of mine, — one parent loved us as infants.
Are they not here in the host, from the shores of loved Lacedæmon,
Or, though they came with the rest in ships that bound through the waters,
Dare they not enter the fight or stand in the council of Heroes,
All for fear of the games and the taunts my crime has awakened?

Helen Seeks for her Brothers, etc., translated from the *Iliad*, Bk. III.

So said she; — they long since in Earth's soft arms were reposing,
There, in their own dear land, their Fatherland, Lacedæmon.

Edward Craven Hawtrey

PALLAS IN OLYMPUS

1858

The fair-tressed Pallas Athene
Rose, like a pillar of tall white cloud, toward silver Olympus;
Far above ocean and shore, and the peaks of the isles and the mainland;
Where no frost nor storm is, in clear blue windless abysses,
High in the home of the summer, the seats of the happy Immortals,
Shrouded in keen deep blaze, unapproachable; there ever youthful
Hebe, Harmoniè, and the daughter of Jove, Aphrodite,
Whirled in the white-linked dance with the gold-crowned Hours and the Graces,
Hand in hand, while clear piped Phœbe, queen of the woodlands.
All day long they rejoiced: but Athene still in her chamber
Bent herself over her loom, as the stars rang loud to her singing,
Chanting of order and right, and of foresight, warden of nations;
Chanting of labor and craft, and of wealth in the port and the garner;
Chanting of valor and fame, and the man who can fall with the foremost,

Fighting for children and wife, and the field which his father bequeathed him.
Sweetly and solemnly sang she, and planned new lessons for mortals;
Happy who, hearing, obey her, the wise unsullied Athene.

Charles Kingsley (Andromeda, ll. 473–489)

THE SANDS O' DEE

1849

"O Mary, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
Across the sands o' Dee!"
The western wind was wild and dank wi' foam,
And all alone went she.

The creeping tide came up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see;
The blinding mist came down and hid the land:
And never home came she.

"O, is it weed, or fish, or floating hair, —
A tress o' golden hair,
O' drownèd maiden's hair, —
Above the nets at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair,
Among the stakes on Dee."

They rowed her in across the rolling foam, —
The cruel, crawling foam,
The cruel, hungry foam, —

To her grave beside the sea;
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home
Across the sands o' Dee.

Charles Kingsley

From the RUBA'IYAT *of* OMAR KHAYYAM

1859–79

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter — and the Bird is on the Wing.

Whether at Naishapur or Babylon,
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

Each Morn a thousand Roses brings, you say;
Yes, but where leaves the Rose of Yesterday?
And this first Summer month that brings the Rose
Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobad away.

Well, let it take them! What have we to do
With Kaikobad the Great, or Kaikhosru?
Let Zal and Rustum bluster as they will,
Or Hatim call to supper — heed not you.

With me along the strip of Herbage strown
That just divides the desert from the sown,
Where name of Slave and Sultan is forgot —
And Peace to Mahmud on his golden Throne!

Jamshyd and Kaikobad, Persian emperors.
Kaikhosru, a Persian emperor.
Rustum, the Persian Hercules; *Zal*, his father.
Hatim, the type of Oriental benevolence.
Mahmud, probably a Persian conqueror of the tenth century.

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread — and Thou
  Beside me singing in the Wilderness —
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

Some for the Glories of This World; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;
  Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

Look to the blowing Rose about us — "Lo,
Laughing," she says, "into the world I blow,
  At once the silken tassel of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw."

And those who husbanded the Golden Grain,
And those who flung it to the winds like Rain,
  Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn'd
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes — or it prospers; and anon,
  Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face,
Lighting a little hour or two — is gone.

Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,
  How Sultan after Sultan with his Pomp
Abode his destined Hour, and went his way.

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep:
  And Bahram, that great Hunter — the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.

The Courts, etc., Persepolis. *Bahram*, a mythical king, so great a hunter that he could catch the *gur*, or wild ass.

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled;
  That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropt in her Lap from some once lovely Head.

And this reviving Herb whose tender Green
Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean —
  Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!

Ah, my Beloved, fill the Cup that clears
To-day of past Regrets and Future Fears:
  To-morrow! — Why, To-morrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years.

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That from his Vintage rolling Time hath prest,
  Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to rest.

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,
  Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend — ourselves to make a Couch — for whom?

Ah, make the most of what we yet must spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
  Dust unto Dust, and under Dust to lie
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and — sans End!

Edward Fitzgerald (*Rubá'iyat* VII–XXIV)

A DREAM

c. 1850

I heard the dogs howl in the moonlight night;
I went to the window to see the sight;

All the Dead that ever I knew
Going one by one and two by two.

On they pass'd, and on they pass'd;
Townsfellows all, from first to last;
Born in the moonlight of the lane,
Quench'd in the heavy shadow again.

Schoolmates, marching as when we play'd
At soldiers once — but now more staid;
Those were the strangest sight to me
Who were drown'd, I knew, in the awful sea.

Straight and handsome folk; bent and weak too;
Some I had loved, and gasp'd to speak to;
Some but a day in their churchyard bed;
Some that I had not known were dead.

A long, long crowd — where each seem'd lonely,
Yet of them all there was one, one only,
Rais'd a head or look'd my way;
She linger'd a moment, — she might not stay.

How long since I saw that fair pale face!
Ah! Mother dear! might I only place
My head on thy breast, a moment to rest,
While thy hand on my tearful cheek were prest.

On, on, a moving bridge they made
Across the moon-stream, from shade to shade,
Young and old, women and men;
Many long-forgot, but remember'd then.

And first there came a bitter laughter;
A sound of tears the moment after;

And then a music so lofty and gay,
That every morning, day by day,
I strive to recall it if I may.

William Allingham

IF THOU MUST LOVE ME

1847

If thou must love me, let it be for naught
Except for love's sake only. Do not say,
"I love her for her smile — her look — her way
Of speaking gently — for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day" —
For these things in themselves, Beloved, may
Be changed, or change for thee — and love, so wrought,
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry:
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (*Sonnets from the Portuguese*)

WHEN OUR TWO SOULS STAND UP

1847

When our two souls stand up erect and strong,
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,
Until the lengthening wings break into fire
At either curving point, — what bitter wrong
Can the earth do to us, that we should not long
Be here contented? Think! In mounting higher,
The angels would press on us, and aspire

To drop some golden orb of perfect song
Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay
  Rather on earth, Beloved — where the unfit
Contrarious moods of men recoil away
  And isolate pure spirits, and permit
A place to stand and love in for a day,
  With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (*Sonnets from the Portuguese*)

SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE NOUGHT AVAILETH

1849

Say not the struggle nought availeth,
  The labor and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
  And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
  It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
  And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
  Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
  Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
  When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
  But westward, look, the land is bright.

Arthur Hugh Clough

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

1849

Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below.
Now my brothers call from the bay;
Now the great winds shoreward blow;
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away.
This way, this way.

Call her once before you go.
Call once yet,
In a voice that she will know:
"Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear:
Children's voices wild with pain,
Surely she will come again.
Call her once, and come away,
This way, this way.
"Mother dear, we cannot stay!
The wild white horses foam and fret,
Margaret! Margaret!"

Come, dear children, come away down.
Call no more.
One last look at the white-walled town,
And the little gray church on the windy shore,
Then come down.
She will not come, though you call all day.
Come away, come away.

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam;
Where the salt weed sways in the stream;
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world forever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sat with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea.
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of the far-off bell,
She sighed, she looked up through the clear green sea,
She said, "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little gray church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world, — ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here with thee."
I said: "Go up, dear heart, through the waves:
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves."
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay,
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say.
Come," I said, and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-walled town,
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little gray church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climbed on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.
She sat by the pillar; we saw her clear;
"Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here.
Dear heart," I said, "we are here alone.
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were sealed to the holy book.
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more,
Come away, come down, call no more.

Down, down, down,
Down to the depths of the sea.
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy,
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well,
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun."

And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh,
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden,
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children,
Come, children, come down.
The hoarse wind blows colder,
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl, —
Singing, "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she,
And alone dwell forever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,

When spring-tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starred with broom;
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanched sands a gloom:
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie;
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white sleeping town;
At the church on the hillside —
And then come back, down.
Singing, "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she:
She left lonely forever
The kings of the sea."

Matthew Arnold

PHILOMELA

1853

Hark! ah, the Nightingale!
The tawny-throated!
Hark! from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark — what pain!

O Wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still, after many years, in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewilder'd brain
That wild, unquench'd deep-sunken, old-world pain —
Say, will it never heal?
And can this fragrant lawn
With its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet tranquil Thames,

And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy rack'd heart and brain
Afford no balm?
Dost thou to-night behold
Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and sear'd eyes,
The too clear web, and thy dumb Sister's shame?
Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor Fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?
Listen, Eugenia —
How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!
Again — thou hearest!
Eternal Passion!
Eternal Pain!

Matthew Arnold

REQUIESCAT

1853

Strew on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew.
In quiet she reposes:
Ah! would that I did too.

Her mirth the world required:
She bath'd it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound.
But for peace her soul was yearning,
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabin'd, ample Spirit,
It flutter'd and fail'd for breath.
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty Hall of Death.

Matthew Arnold

DOVER BEACH

1867

The sea is calm to-night,
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the Straits; — on the French coast, the light
Gleams, and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the ebb meets the moon-blanch'd sand,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves suck back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægæan, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd;
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating to the breath
Of the night-winds down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Matthew Arnold

THE CUCKOO'S PARTING CRY

1867

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
Before the roses and the longest day —
When garden-walks and all the grassy floor
With blossoms red and white of fallen May
And chestnut-flowers are strewn —
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vexed garden-trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet William with its homely cottage-smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow;
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening star.

Matthew Arnold (in Thyrsis)

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

1846

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
. . . Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me — her hair
Fell all about my face. . .
Nothing: the autumn fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart-remembered names;
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
  Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
  Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke as when
  The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon
  Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
  She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
  Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
  Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be harkened? When those bells
  Possessed the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
  Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me,
  For he will come," she said.
"Have I not prayed in Heaven? — on earth,
  Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
  And shall I feel afraid?

"When round his head the aureole clings,
  And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
  To the deep wells of light;
As unto a stream we will step down,
  And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayer sent up to God;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

"We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His name audibly.

"And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know."

(Alas! We two, we two, thou say'st!
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee?)

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
And foreheads garlanded;
Into the fine cloth white like flame
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robes for them
Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak:
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles:
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me: —
Only to live as once on earth
With Love, — only to be,
As then awhile, forever now
Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild, —
"All this is when he comes." She ceased.
The light thrilled towards her, fill'd
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smil'd.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres:
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

SISTER HELEN

1853

"Why did you melt your waxen man,
Sister Helen?
To-day is the third since you began."
"The time was long, yet the time ran,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Three days to-day, between Hell and Heaven!)

"But if you have done your work aright,
Sister Helen,
You'll let me play, for you said I might."
"Be very still in your play to-night,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Third night, to-night between Hell and Heaven!)

"You said it must melt ere vesper-bell,
Sister Helen;
If now it be molten, all is well."
"Even so, — nay, peace! you cannot tell,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Oh what is this, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Oh the waxen knave was plump to-day,
Sister Helen;
How like dead folk he has dropped away!"
"Nay now, of the dead what can you say,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What of the dead, between Hell and Heaven?)

"See, see, the sunken pile of wood,
Sister Helen,
Shines through the thinned wax red as blood!"
"Nay now, when looked you yet on blood,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
How pale she is, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Now close your eyes, for they're sick and sore,
Sister Helen,
And I'll play without the gallery door."
"Aye, let me rest, — I'll lie on the floor,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What rest to-night between Hell and Heaven?)

"Here high up in the balcony,
Sister Helen,
The moon flies face to face with me."
"Aye, look and say whatever you see,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What sight to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Outside it's merry in the wind's wake,
Sister Helen;
In the shaken trees the chill stars shake."

"Hush, heard you a horse-tread as you spake,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What sound to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)

"I hear a horse-tread, and I see,
Sister Helen,
Three horsemen that ride terribly."
"Little brother, whence come the three,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Whence should they come, between Hell and Heaven?)

"They come by the hill-verge from Boyne Bar,
Sister Helen,
And one draws nigh, but two are afar."
"Look, look, do you know them who they are,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Who should they be, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Oh, it's Keith of Eastholm rides so fast.
Sister Helen,
For I know the white mane on the blast."
"The hour has come, has come at last,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Her hour at last, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He has made a sign and called Halloo!
Sister Helen,
And he says that he would speak with you."
"Oh tell him I fear the frozen dew,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Why laughs she thus, between Hell and Heaven?)

"The wind is loud, but I hear him cry,
Sister Helen,
That Keith of Ewern's like to die."
"And he and thou, and thou and I,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
And they and we, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Three days ago, on his marriage-morn,
Sister Helen,
He sickened, and lies since then forlorn."
"For bridegroom's side is the bride a thorn,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Cold bridal cheer, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Three days and nights he has lain abed,
Sister Helen,
And he prays in torment to be dead."
"The thing may chance, if he have prayed,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
If he have prayed, between Hell and Heaven!)

"But he has not ceased to cry to-day,
Sister Helen,
That you should take your curse away."
"*My* prayer was heard, — he need but pray,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Shall God not hear, between Hell and Heaven?)

"But he says, till you take back your ban,
Sister Helen,
His soul would pass, yet never can."

"Nay then, shall I slay a living man,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
A living soul, between Hell and Heaven!)

"But he calls forever on your name,
Sister Helen,
And says that he melts before a flame."
"My heart for his pleasure fared the same,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Fire at the heart, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Here's Keith of Westholm riding fast,
Sister Helen,
For I know the white plume on the blast."
"The hour, the sweet hour I forecast,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Is the hour sweet, between Hell and Heaven?)

"He stops to speak, and he stills his horse,
Sister Helen;
But his words are drowned in the wind's course."
"Nay hear, nay hear, you must hear perforce,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What word now heard, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Oh, he says that Keith of Ewern's cry,
Sister Helen,
Is ever to see you ere he die."
"In all that his soul sees, there am I,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
The soul's one sight, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He sends a ring and a broken coin,
Sister Helen,
And bids you mind the banks of Boyne."
"What else he broke will he ever join,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
No, never joined, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He yields you these and craves full fain,
Sister Helen,
You pardon him in his mortal pain."
"What else he took will he give again,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Not twice to give, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He calls your name in an agony,
Sister Helen,
That even dead Love must weep to see."
"Hate, born of Love, is blind as he,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Love turned to hate, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh it's Keith of Keith now that rides fast,
Sister Helen,
For I know the white hair on the blast."
"The short, short hour will soon be past,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Will soon be past, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He looks at me and he tries to speak,
Sister Helen,
But oh! his voice is sad and weak!"

"What here should the mighty Baron seek,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Is this the end, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Oh his son still cries, if you forgive,
Sister Helen,
The body dies, but the soul shall live."
"Fire shall forgive me as I forgive,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
As she forgives, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh he prays you, as his heart would rive,
Sister Helen,
To save his dear son's soul alive."
"Fire cannot slay it, it shall thrive,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Alas, alas, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He cries to you, kneeling in the road,
Sister Helen,
To go with him for the love of God!"
"The way is long to his son's abode,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
The way is long, between Hell and Heaven!)

"A lady's here, by a dark steed brought,
Sister Helen,
So darkly clad, I saw her not."
"See her now or never see aught,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What more to see, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Her hood falls back, and the moon shines fair,
Sister Helen,
On the Lady of Ewern's golden hair."
"Blest hour of my power and her despair,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Hour blest and banned, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Pale, pale her cheeks, that in pride did glow,
Sister Helen,
'Neath the bridal-wreath three days ago."
"One morn for pride and three days for woe,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Three days, three nights, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Her clasped hands stretch from her bending head,
Sister Helen;
With the loud wind's wail her sobs are wed."
"What wedding-strains hath her bridal-bed,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What strain but death's, between Hell and Heaven?)

"She may not speak, she sinks in a swoon,
Sister Helen, —
She lifts her lips and gasps on the moon."
"Oh! might I but hear her soul's blithe tune,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Her woe's dumb cry, between Hell and Heaven!)

"They've caught her to Westholm's saddle-bow,
Sister Helen,

And her moonlit hair gleams white in its flow."
"Let it turn whiter than winter snow,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Wo-withered gold, between Hell and Heaven!)

"O sister Helen, you heard the bell,
Sister Helen!
More loud than the vesper-chime it fell."
"No vesper-chime, but a dying knell,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
His dying knell, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Alas! but I fear the heavy sound,
Sister Helen;
Is it in the sky or in the ground?"
"Say, have they turned their horses round,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What would she more, between Hell and Heaven?)

"They have raised the old man from his knee,
Sister Helen,
And they ride in silence hastily."
"More fast the naked soul doth flee,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
The naked soul, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Flank to flank are the three steeds gone,
Sister Helen,
But the lady's dark steed goes alone."
"And her lonely bridegroom's soul hath flown,
Little brother."

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
The lonely ghost, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh the wind is sad in the iron chill,
Sister Helen,
And weary sad they look by the hill."
"But he and I are sadder still,
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Most sad of all, between Hell and Heaven!)

"See, see the wax has dropped from its place,
Sister Helen,
And the flames are winning up apace!"
"Yet here they burn but for a space,
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Here for a space, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Ah! what white thing at the door has crossed,
Sister Helen,
Ah! what is this that sighs in the frost?"
"A soul that's lost as mine is lost,
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Lost, lost, all lost, between Hell and Heaven!)

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

MIRACLES

1855

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars,
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the wren,

pismire, ant.

And the tree-toad is a chef-d'œuvre for the highest,
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of heaven,
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery,
And the cow crunching with depress'd head surpasses any statue,
And a mouse is a miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels.

Walt Whitman (*Song of Myself*)

LETTERS FROM GOD

1855

I have said that the soul is not more than the body,
And I have said that the body is not more than the soul;
And nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's self is,
And whoever walks a furlong without sympathy, walks to his own funeral drest in his shroud,
And I or you pocketless of a dime may purchase the pick of the earth,
And to glance with an eye or show a bean in its pod confounds the learning of all times,
And there is no trade or employment but the young man following it may become a hero,
And there is no object so soft but it makes a hub for the wheel'd universe,
And I say to any man or woman, Let your soul stand cool and composed before a million universes.
And I say to mankind, Be not curious about God,
For I who am curious about each am not curious about God;
(No array of terms can say how much I am at peace about God and about death.)

I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand
God not in the least,
Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful
than myself.

Why should I wish to see God better than this day?
I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four,
and each moment then;
In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my
own face in the glass;
I find letters from God, dropt in the street, and every
one is sign'd by God's name,
And I leave them where they are, for I know that
wheresoe'er I go,
Others will punctually come for ever and ever.

Walt Whitman (*Song of Myself*)

WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER

1865

When I heard the learn'd astronomer;
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns
before me;
When I was shown the charts and the diagrams, to
add, divide, and measure them;
When I, sitting, heard the astronomer, where he
lectured with much applause in the lecture-
room,
How soon, unaccountable, I became tired and sick;
Till, rising and gliding out, I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

Walt Whitman

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

1865

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won;
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring.
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up — for you the flag is flung — for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths — for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done;
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won.

Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

Walt Whitman

RECONCILIATION

1865

Word over all, beautiful as the sky,
Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be utterly lost,
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world;
For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,
I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin — I draw near,
Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

Walt Whitman

DAREST THOU NOW, O SOUL

1871

Darest thou now, O soul,
Walk out with me toward the unknown region,
Where neither ground is for the feet nor any path to follow?

No map there, nor guide,
Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand,
Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor eyes, are in that land.

I know it not, O soul!
Nor dost thou, all is a blank before us,
All waits undream'd of in that region, that inaccessible land.

Till when the ties loosen,
All but the ties eternal, Time and Space,
Nor darkness, gravitation, sense, nor any bounds bounding us.

Then we burst forth, we float,
In Time and Space, O soul, prepared for them,
Equal, equipt at last (O joy! O Fruit of all!) them to fulfill, O soul.

Walt Whitman

TO THE MAN-OF-WAR BIRD

1876

Thou who has slept all night upon the storm,
Waking renew'd on thy prodigious pinions,
(Burst the wild storm? above it thou ascended'st,
And rested on the sky, thy slave that cradled thee),
Now a blue point, far, far in heaven floating,
As to the light emerging here on deck I watch thee
(Myself a speck, a point on the world's floating vast).

Far, far at sea,
After the night's fierce drifts have strewn the shore with wrecks,
With reappearing day as now so happy and serene,
The rosy and elastic dawn, the flashing sun,
The limpid spread of air cerulean,
Thou also reappearest.

Thou born to match the gale (thou art all wings),
To cope with heaven and earth and sea and hurricane,
Thou ship of air that never furl'st thy sails,
Days, even weeks untired and onward, through spaces, realms gyrating,
At dusk that look'st on Senegal, at morn America,
That sport'st amid the lightning-flash and thunder-cloud,
In them, in thy experiences, had'st thou my soul,
What joys! what joys were thine!

Walt Whitman

THE FIRST DANDELION

1888

Simple and fresh and fair from winter's close emerging,
As if no artifice of fashion, business, politics, had ever been,
Forth from its sunny nook of shelter'd grass — innocent, golden, calm as the dawn,
The spring's first dandelion shows its trustful face.

Walt Whitman

A BIRTHDAY

c. 1861

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles on a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves, and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves, and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me.

Christina Rossetti

UP–HILL

c. 1861

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of Labor you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

Christina Rossetti

vair, fur (of ermine? squirrel?)

A PAUSE

1862

They made the chamber sweet with flowers and leaves,
And the bed sweet with flowers on which I lay;
While my soul, love-bound, loiter'd on its way.
I did not hear the birds about the eaves,
Nor hear the reapers talk among the sheaves:
Only my soul kept watch from day to day,
My thirsty soul kept watch for one away: —
Perhaps he loves, I thought, remembers, grieves.

At length there came the step upon the stair,
Upon the lock the old familiar hand:
Then first my spirit seem'd to scent the air
Of Paradise; then first the tardy sand
Of time ran golden; and I felt my hair
Put on a glory, and my soul expand.

Christina Rossetti

THE GILLIFLOWER OF GOLD

1858

A golden gilliflower to-day
I wore upon my helm alway,
And won the prize of this tourney.
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

However well Sir Giles might sit,
His sun was weak to wither it,
Lord Miles's blood was dew on it:
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

Although my spear in splinters flew
From John's steel-coat, my eye was true;
I wheeled about, and cried for you,
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

Yea, do not doubt my heart was good,
Though my sword flew like rotten wood,
To shout, although I scarcely stood,
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

My hand was steady too, to take
My axe from round my neck, and break
John's steel-coat up, for my love's sake.
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

When I stood in my tent again,
Arming afresh, I felt a pain
Take hold of me, I was so fain —
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

To hear: "*Honneur aux fils des preux!*"
Right in my ears again, and shew
The gilliflower blossom'd new.
Hah! hah! la belle jaune girofleé.

The Sieur Guillaume against me came,
His tabard bore three points of flame
From a red heart: with little blame —
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

Our tough spears crackled up like straw;
He was the first to turn and draw
His sword, that had nor speck nor flaw, —
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

But I felt weaker than a maid,
And my brain, dizzied and afraid,
Within my helm a fierce tune played, —
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

Until I thought of your dear head,
Bow'd to the gilliflower bed,
The yellow flowers stain'd with red; —
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

Crash! how the swords met "*giroflée*"!
The fierce tune in my helm would play,
"*La belle! la belle! jaune giroflée!*"
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

Once more the great swords met again,
"*La belle! la belle!*" but who fell then?
Le Sieur Guillaume, who struck down ten; —
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

And as with mazed and unarm'd face,
Toward my own crown and the Queen's place,
They led me at a gentle pace —
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

I almost saw your quiet head
Bow'd o'er the gilliflower bed,
The yellow flowers stain'd with red —
Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.

William Morris

SHAMEFUL DEATH

1858

There were four of us about that bed;
The mass-priest knelt at his side,
I and his mother stood at the head,
Over his feet lay the bride;
We were quite sure that he was dead,
Though his eyes were open wide.

He did not die in the night,
  He did not die in the day,
But in the morning twilight
  His spirit pass'd away,
When neither sun nor moon was bright,
  And the trees were merely grey.

He was not slain with the sword,
  Knight's axe, or the knightly spear,
Yet spoke he never a word
  After he came in here;
I cut away the cord
  From the neck of my brother dear.

He did not strike one blow,
  For the recreants came behind,
In a place where the hornbeams grow,
  A path right hard to find,
For the hornbeam boughs swing so,
  That the twilight makes it blind.

They lighted a great torch then,
  When his arms were pinion'd fast;
Sir John the Knight of the Fen,
  Sir Guy of the Dolorous Blast,
With knights threescore and ten,
  Hung brave Lord Hugh at last.

I am threescore and ten,
  And my hair is all turn'd grey,
But I met Sir John of the Fen
  Long ago on a Summer day,
And am glad to think of the moment when
  I took his life away.

I am threescore and ten,
And my strength is mostly pass'd,
But long ago I and my men,
When the sky was overcast,
And the smoke roll'd over the reeds of the fen,
Slew Guy of the Dolorous Blast.

And now, knights all of you,
I pray you pray for Sir Hugh,
A good knight and a true,
And for Alice, his wife, pray too.

William Morris

THE NYMPH'S SONG TO HYLAS

P. 1867

I know a little garden-close
Set thick with lily and red rose,
Where I would wander if I might
From dewy dawn to dewy night,
And have one with me wandering.

And though within it no birds sing,
And though no pillar'd house is there,
And though the apple boughs are bare
Of fruit and blossom, would to God,
Her feet upon the green grass trod,
And I beheld them as before!

There comes a murmur from the shore,
And in the place two fair streams are,
Drawn from the purple hills afar,
Drawn down into the restless sea;
The hills whose flowers ne'er fed the bee,

The shore no ship has ever seen,
Still beaten by the billows green,
Whose murmur comes unceasingly
Unto the place for which I cry.

For which I cry both day and night,
For which I let slip all delight,
That maketh me both deaf and blind,
Careless to win, unskill'd to find,
And quick to lose what all men seek.

Yet tottering as I am, and weak,
Still have I left a little breath
To seek within the jaws of death
An entrance to that happy place;
To seek the unforgotten face
Once seen, once kiss'd, once reft from me
Anigh the murmuring of the sea.

William Morris (in *The Life and Death of Jason*)

LUCIFER IN STARLIGHT

1862

On a starr'd night Prince Lucifer uprose.
Tired of his dark dominion swung the fiend
Above the rolling ball in cloud part screen'd,
Where sinners hugg'd their spectre of repose.
Poor prey to his hot fit of pride were those.
And now upon his western wing he lean'd,
Now his huge bulk o'er Afric's sands careen'd,
Now the black planet shadow'd Arctic snows.
Soaring through wider zones that prick'd his scars
With memory of the old revolt from Awe,
He reach'd a middle height, and at the stars,

Which are the brain of heaven, he look'd and sank.
Around the ancient track march'd, rank on rank,
The army of unalterable law.

George Meredith

TRAGIC MEMORY

1862

In our old shipwrecked days there was an hour,
When in the firelight steadily aglow,
Joined slackly, we beheld the red chasm grow
Among the clicking coals. Our library-bower
That eve was left to us: and hushed we sat
As lovers to whom Time is whispering.
From sudden-opened doors we heard them sing:
The nodding elders mixed good wine with chat.
Well knew we that Life's greatest treasure lay
With us, and of it was our talk. "Ah, yes!
Love dies!" I said: I never thought it less.
She yearned to me that sentence to unsay.
Then when the fire domed blackening, I found
Her cheek was salt against my kiss, and swift
Up the sharp scale of sobs her breast did lift: —
Now am I haunted by that taste! that sound!

George Meredith (in *Modern Love*)

DIRGE IN WOODS

1888

A wind sways the pines,
And below
Not a breath of wild air;
Still as the mosses that glow
On the flooring and over the lines
Of the roots here and there.

The pine-tree drops its dead;
They are quiet, as under the sea.
Overhead, overhead
Rushes life in a race,
As the clouds the clouds chase:
And we go,
And we drop like the fruits of the tree,
Even we,
Even so.

George Meredith

From INSPIRATION

c. 1863

Whate'er we leave to God God does,
And blesses us:
The work we choose should be our own
God lets alone.

If with light head erect I sing,
Though all the Muses lend their force,
From my poor love of anything,
The verse is weak and shallow as its source.

But if with bended neck I grope
Listening behind me for my wit,
With faith superior to hope,
More anxious to keep back than forward it, —

Making my soul accomplice there
Unto the flame my heart hath lit,
Then will the verse for ever wear, —
Time cannot bend the line which God has writ.

Henry David Thoreau

CHORUS

From *Atalanta in Calydon*

1865

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
Maiden most beautiful, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
With a clamor of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendor and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,
Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!
For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For the winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;

And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
Ripe grasses trammel a traveling foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
From leaf to flower and flower to fruit:
And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,
And the hoofèd heel of a satyr crushes
The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with delight
The Mænad and the Bassarid;
And soft as lips that laugh and hide
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls from the Bacchanal's hair
Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
Her bright breast shortening into sighs;
The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare
The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

EASTWARD

c. 1871

As one that ere a June day rise
Makes seaward for the dawn, and tries
  The water with delighted limbs
  That taste the sweet dark sea, and swims
Right eastward under strengthening skies,
  And sees the gradual rippling rims
Of waves whence day breaks blossom-wise
  Take fire ere light peer well above,
  And laughs from all his heart with love;

And softlier swimming with raised head
Feels the full flower of morning shed
  And fluent sunrise round him rolled
  That laps and laves his body bold
With fluctuant heaven in water's stead,
  And urgent through the growing gold
Strikes, and sees all the spray flash red,
  And his soul takes the sun, and yearns
  For joy wherewith the sea's heart burns;

So the soul seeking through the dark
Heavenward, a dove without an ark,
  Transcends the unnavigable sea
  Of years that wear out memory;
So calls, a sunward-singing lark,
  In the ear of souls that should be free;
So points them toward the sun for mark
  Who steer not for the stress of waves,
  And seek strange helmsmen, and are slaves.

For if the swimmer's eastward eye
Must see no sunrise — must put by

The hope that lifted him and led
Once, to have light about his head,
To see beneath the clear low sky
The green foam-whitened wave wax red
And all the morning's banner fly —
Then, as earth's helpless hopes go down,
Let earth's self in the dark tides drown.

Yea, if no morning must behold
Man, other than were they now cold,
And other deeds than past deeds done,
Nor any near or far-off sun
Salute him risen and sunlike-souled,
Free, boundless, fearless, perfect, one,
Let man's world die like worlds of old,
And here in heaven's sight only be
The sole sun on the worldless sea.

Algernon Charles Swinburne
(from the *Epilogue to Songs before Sunrise*)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

1874–75

Now at thy soft recalling voice I rise
Where thought is lord o'er Time's complete estate,
Like as a dove from out the gray sedge flies
To tree-tops green where cooes his heavenly mate.
From these clear coverts high and cool I see
How every time with every time is knit,
And each to all is mortised cunningly,
And none is sole or whole, yet all are fit.
Thus, if this Age but as a comma show
'Twixt weightier clauses of large-worded years,
My calmer soul scorns not the mark: I know
This crooked point Time's complex sentence clears.

Yet more I learn while, Friend! I sit by thee:
Who sees all time, sees all eternity.

Sidney Lanier (*Sonnet II*)

ODE

1874

We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample an empire down.

We, in the ages lying,
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself with our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth. . . .

Arthur O'Shaughnessy

INVICTUS

1875

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbow'd.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

William Ernest Henley

CROSSING THE PLAINS

c. 1876

What great yoked brutes with briskets low,
With wrinkled necks, like buffalo,
With round, brown, liquid, pleading, eyes,
That turn'd so slow and sad to you,
That shone like love's eyes soft with tears,
That seem'd to plead, and make replies,
The while they bow'd their necks and drew
The creaking load; and looked at you.

Their sable briskets swept the ground,
Their cloven feet kept solemn sound.

Two sullen bullocks led the line,
Their great eyes shining bright like wine;
Two sullen captive kings were they,
That had in time held herds at bay,
And even now they crush'd the sod
With stolid sense of majesty,
And stately stepp'd and stately trod,
As if 'twere something still to be
Kings even in captivity.

"Joaquin" Miller

WHEN I SAW YOU LAST, ROSE

A villanelle

1877

When I saw you last, Rose,
You were only so high; —
How fast the time goes!

Like a bud ere it blows,
You just peeped at the sky,
When I saw you last, Rose!

Now your petals unclose,
Now your May-time is nigh; —
How fast the time goes!

And a life, — how it grows!
You were scarcely so shy
When I saw you last, Rose!

In your bosom it shows
  There's a guest on the sly;
How fast the time goes!

Is it Cupid? Who knows!
  Yet you used not to sigh,
When I saw you last, Rose; —
How fast the time goes!

Austin Dobson

A KISS

A Triolet

1877

Rose kissed me to-day.
  Will she kiss me to-morrow?
Let it be as it may,
  Rose kissed me to-day.
But the pleasure gives way
  To a savor of sorrow: —
Rose kissed me to-day, —
  Will she kiss me to-morrow?

Austin Dobson (from *Rose Leaves*)

IN AFTER DAYS

Rondeau

1897

In after days when grasses high
O'er-top the stone where I shall lie,
  Though ill or well the world adjust
  My slender claim to honor'd dust,
I shall not question nor reply.

I shall not see the morning sky;
I shall not hear the night-wind sigh;
I shall be mute, as all men must
In after days!

But yet, now living, fain would I
That some one then should testify,
Saying — "He held his pen in trust
To Art, not serving shame or lust."
Will none? — Then let my memory die
In after days!

Austin Dobson

MEMORY

Bef. 1882

My mind lets go a thousand things,
Like dates of wars and deaths of kings,
And yet recalls the very hour —
'Twas noon by yonder village tower,
And on the last blue noon in May —
The wind came briskly up this way,
Crisping the brook beside the road;
Then, passing here, set down its load
Of pine-scents, and shook listlessly
Two petals from that wild-rose tree.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich

EIGHTEEN-EIGHTIES AND NINETIES
1880–1900

DÜRER'S *MELANCHOLIA*

1884

What holds her fix'd far eyes nor lets them range?
Not the strange sea, strange earth, or heaven more strange;
But her own phantom dwarfing these great three,
More strange than all, more old than heaven, earth, sea.

Sir William Watson

ODE IN MAY

1898

Let me go forth, and share
The overflowing Sun
With one wise friend, or one
Better than wise, being fair,
Where the pewit wheels and dips
On heights of bracken and ling,
And Earth, unto her leaflet tips,
Tingles with the Spring.

What is so sweet and dear
As a prosperous morn in May,
The confident prime of the day,
And the dauntless youth of the year,
When nothing that asks for bliss,
Asking aright, is denied,
And half of the world a bridegroom is,
And half of the world a bride?

The Song of Mingling flows,
Grave, ceremonial, pure,
As once, from lips that endure,
The cosmic descant rose,
When the temporal lord of life,
Going his golden way,
Had taken a wondrous maid to wife
That long had said him nay.

For of old the Sun, our sire,
Came wooing the mother of men,
Earth, that was virginal then,
Vestal fire to his fire.
Silent her bosom and coy,
But the strong god sued and pressed;
And born of their starry nuptial joy
Are all that drink of her breast.

And the triumph of him that begot,
And the travail of her that bore,
Behold, they are evermore
As warp and weft in our lot.
We are children of splendor and flame,
Of shuddering, also, and tears.
Magnificent out of the dust we came,
And abject from the Spheres.

O bright irresistible lord,
We are fruit of Earth's womb, each one,
And fruit of thy loins, O Sun,
Whence first was the seed outpoured.
To thee as our Father we bow,
Forbidden thy Father to see,
Who is older and greater than thou, as thou
Art greater and older than we.

Thou art but as a word of his speech,
Thou art but as a wave of his hand;
Thou art brief as a glitter of sand
Twixt tide and tide on his beach;
Thou art less than a spark of his fire,
Or a moment's mood of his soul:
Thou art lost in the notes on the lips of his choir
That chant the chant of the Whole.

Sir William Watson

THE WILD RIDE

c. 1884

I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses,
All night, from their stalls, the importunate pawing and neighing.

Let cowards and laggards fall back! But alert to the saddle,
Weatherworn and abreast, go men of our galloping legion,
With a stirrup-cup each to the lily of women that loves him.

The trail is through dolor and dread, over crags and morasses;
There are shapes by the way, there are things that appal or entice us:
What odds? We are Knights of the Grail, we are vowed to the riding.

Thought's self is a vanishing wing, and joy is a cobweb,
And friendship a flower in the dust, and glory a sunbeam:
Not here is our prize, nor, alas! after these our pursuing.

A dipping of plumes, a tear, a shake of the bridle,
A passing salute to this world and her pitiful beauty;
We hurry with never a word in the track of our fathers.

I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses,
All night, from their stalls, the importunate pawing and neighing.

We spur to a land of no name, outracing the storm-wind;
We leap to the infinite dark like sparks from the anvil.
Thou leadest, O God! All's well with Thy troopers that follow.

Louise Imogen Guiney

DE SHEEPFOL'

1884

De massa ob de sheepfol',
Dat guards de sheepfol' bin,
Look out in de gloomerin' meadows,
Wha'r de long night rain begin —
So he call to de hirelin' shepa'd,
"Is my sheep, is dey all come in?"

O den, says de hirelin' shepa'd:
"Dey's some, dey's black and thin,
And some, dey's po' ol' wedda's;
But de res', dey's all brung in.
But de res', dey's all brung in."

Den de massa ob de sheepfol',
Dat guards de sheepfol' bin,
Goes down in de gloomerin' meadows,
Wha'r de long night rain begin —
So he le' down de ba's ob de sheepfol',
Callin' sof', "Come in. Come in."
Callin' sof', "Come in. Come in."

Den up t'ro' de gloomerin' meadows,
T'ro' de col' night rain and win',
And up t'ro' de gloomerin' rain-paf',
Wha'r de sleet fa' pie'cin' thin,
De po' los' sheep ob de sheepfol',
Dey all comes gadderin' in.
De po' los' sheep ob de sheepfol',
Dey all comes gadderin' in.

Sarah Pratt McLean Greene

REQUIEM

c. 1887

Under the wide and starry sky
Dig my grave and let me lie:
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he long'd to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

Robert Louis Stevenson

AUSPEX

Pub. 1887

My heart, I cannot still it,
Nest that had song-birds in it;
And when the last shall go,
The dreary days, to fill it,
Instead of lark or linnet,
Shall whirl dead leaves and snow.

Had they been swallows only,
Without the passion stronger
That skyward longs and sings, —
Woe's me, I shall be lonely
When I can feel no longer
The impatience of their wings!

A moment, sweet delusion,
Like birds the brown leaves hover;
But it will not be long
Before their wild confusion
Fall wavering down to cover
The poet and his song.

James Russell Lowell

TEARS

c. 1887

When I consider Life and its few years —
A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our ears;
A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening street, —
I wonder at the idleness of tears.

Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight,
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep:
Homer his sight, David his little lad!

Lizette Woodworth Reese

THE SOUL SELECTS [1]

1890–96

The soul selects her own society,
Then shuts the door;
On her divine majority
Obtrude no more.

Unmoved, she notes the chariots pausing
At her low gate;
Unmoved, an emperor is kneeling
Upon her mat.

I've known her from an ample nation
Choose one;
Then close the valves of her attention
Like stone.

Emily Dickinson

MYSTERIES [1]

1890–96

The murmur of a bee
A witchcraft yieldeth me.
If any ask me why,
'Twere easier to die
Than tell.

[1] Copyright, Little, Brown & Company.

The red upon the hill
Taketh away my will;
If anybody sneer,
Take care, for God is here,
That's all.

The breaking of the day
Addeth to my degree;
If any ask me how,
Artist, who drew me so,
Must tell!

Emily Dickinson

A CEMETERY [1]

1890–96

This quiet Dust was Gentlemen and Ladies
And Lads and Girls;
Was laughter and ability and sighing,
And frocks and curls.
This passive place a Summer's nimble mansion,
Where Bloom and Bees
Fulfilled their Oriental Circuit,
Then ceased like these.

Emily Dickinson

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

1891

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.

[1] Copyright, Little, Brown & Company.

Up vistaed hopes, I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat — and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet —
"All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
Trellised with intertwining charities;
(For, though I knew His love who followèd,
Yet was I sore adread
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside);
But, if one little casement parted wide,
The gust of His approach would clash it to.
Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.
Across the margent of the world I fled,
And troubled the gold gateways of the stars.
Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars;
Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
I said to dawn, Be sudden; to eve, Be soon;
With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over
From this tremendous Lover!
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
I tempted all His servitors, but to find
My own betrayal in their constancy,
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;

Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,
The long savannahs of the blue;
Or whether, Thunder-driven,
They clanged His chariot 'thwart a heaven
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet: —
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat —
"Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me."

I sought no more that after which I strayed
In face of man or maid;
But still within the little children's eyes
Seems something, something that replies;
They at least are for me, surely for me!
I turned me to them very wistfully;
But, just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.
"Come then, ye other children, Nature's — share
With me" (said I) "your delicate fellowship;
Let me greet you lip to lip,
Let me twine you with caresses,
Wantoning
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,
Banqueting
With her in her wind-walled palace,
Underneath her azured dais,
Quaffing, as your taintless way is,
From a chalice

Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring."
So it was done:
I in their delicate fellowship was one —
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.
I knew all the swift importings
On the wilful face of skies;
I knew how the clouds arise
Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;
All that's born or dies
Rose and drooped with — made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine —
With them joyed and was bereaven.
I was heavy with the even,
When she lit her glimmering tapers
Round the day's dead sanctities.
I laughed in the morning's eyes.
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
Heaven and I wept together,
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;
Against the red throb of its sunset-heart
I laid my own to beat,
And share commingling heat;
But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's gray cheek.
For ah! we know not what each other says,
These things and I; in sound *I* speak —
Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;
Let her, if she would own me,
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
The breasts o' her tenderness:
Never did any milk of hers once bless
My thirsting mouth.
Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
With unperturbèd pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;
And past those noisèd Feet
A voice comes yet more fleet —
"Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not
Me."

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,
And smitten me to my knee;
I am defenceless utterly.
I slept, methinks, and woke,
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.
In the rash lustihead of my young powers,
I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years —
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.
Yea, faileth now even dream
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;
Even the linkèd fantasies, in whose blossomy twist
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account
For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.
Ah! is Thy love indeed
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,
Suffering no flowers except itself to mount?
Ah! must —
Designer infinite! —
Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it?
My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;
And now my heart is as a broken fount,

Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever
From the dank thoughts that shiver
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.
Such is; what is to be?
The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity;
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again.
But not ere him who summoneth
I first have seen, enwound
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
Whether man's heart or life it be which yields
Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields
Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit
Comes on at hand the bruit;
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea.
"And is thy earth so marred,
Shattered in shard on shard?
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!
Strange, piteous, futile thing,
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught"
(He said),
"And human love needs human meriting:
How hast thou merited —
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee
Save Me, save only Me?

All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"

Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."

Francis Thompson

AMENDS TO NATURE

1892–95

I have loved colors, and not flowers;
Their motion, not the swallows' wings;
And wasted more than half my hours
Without the comradeship of things.

How is it, now, that I can see,
With love and wonder and delight,
The children of the hedge and tree,
The little lords of day and night?

How is it that I see the roads,
No longer with usurping eyes,
A twilight meeting-place for toads,
A mid-day mart for butterflies?

I feel, in every midge that hums,
Life, fugitive and infinite,

And suddenly the world becomes
A part of me and I of it.

Arthur Symons

THE CHURCHYARD ON THE SANDS

1893

My Love lies in the gates of foam,
The last dear wreck of shore:
The naked sea-marsh binds her home,
The sand her chamber door.

The grey gull flaps the written stones,
The ox-birds chase the tide:
And near that narrow field of bones
Great ships at anchor ride . . .

In peace the swallow's eggs are laid
Along the belfry walls;
The tempest does not reach her shade,
The rain her silent halls . . .

Strong and alone, my Dove, with thee;
And tho' mine eyes be wet,
There's nothing in the world to me
So dear as my regret . . .

Sleep and forget all things but one,
Heard in each wave of sea, —
How lonely all the years will run
Until I rest by thee.

Lord de Tabley

RENOUNCEMENT

1893

I must not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,
I shun the thought that lurks in all delight —
The thought of thee — and in the blue Heaven's height,
And in the sweetest passage of a song.
O just beyond the fairest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits, hidden yet bright;
But it must never, never come in sight;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.
But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,
Must doff my will as raiment laid away, —
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

Alice Meynell

LONDON SNOW

1890–94

When men were all asleep the snow came flying,
In large white flakes falling on the city brown,
Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,
Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town;
Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing;
Lazily and incessantly floating down and down:
Silently sifting and veiling road, roof, and railing;
Hiding difference, making unevenness even,
Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.
All night it fell, and when full inches seven
It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,

The clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven;
And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness
Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare:
The eye marveled — marveled at the dazzling whiteness;
The ear harkened to the stillness of the solemn air;
No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,
And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.
Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling,
They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze
Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snowballing;
Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to their knees;
Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,
"O look at the trees!" they cried, "O look at the trees!"
With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder,
Following along the white deserted way,
A country company long dispersed asunder:
When now already the sun, in pale display
Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below
His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day.
For now doors open, and war is waged with the snow:
And trains of sombre men, past tale of number,
Tread along brown paths, as toward their toil they go:
But even for them awhile no cares encumber
Their minds diverted; the daily word is unspoken,
The daily thoughts of labor and sorrow slumber
At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the charm they have broken.

Robert Bridges

HECTOR IN HADES

1894

I heard great Hector sounding war's alarms,
Where thro' the listless ghosts chiding he strode,
As tho' the Greeks besieged his last abode,
And he his Troy's hope still, her king-at-arms.
But on those gentle meads, which Lethe charms
With weary oblivion, his passion glow'd
Like the cold night-worm's candle, and only show'd
Such mimic flame as neither heats nor harms.

'Twas plain to read, even by those shadows quaint,
How rude catastrophe had dimm'd his day,
And blighted all his cheer with stern complaint:
To arms! to arms! what more the voice would say
Was swallow'd in the valleys, and grew faint
Upon the thin air, as he pass'd away.

Robert Bridges (in *The Growth of Love*)

A BALLAD OF HELL [1]

1895

"A letter from my love to-day!
Oh, unexpected, dear appeal!"
She struck a happy tear away,
And broke the crimson seal.

"My love, there is no help on earth,
No help in heaven; the dead-man's bell
Must toll our wedding; our first hearth
Must be the well-paved floor of hell."

[1] By permission, from *New Ballads* by John Davidson, published by E. P. Dutton & Co.

The color died from out her face,
  Her eyes like ghostly candles shone;
She cast dread looks about the place,
  Then clenched her teeth and read right on.

"I may not pass the prison door;
  Here must I rot from day to day,
Unless I wed whom I abhor,
  My cousin, Blanche of Valencay.

"At midnight with my dagger keen,
  I'll take my life; it must be so.
Meet me in hell to-night, my queen,
  For weal and woe."

She laughed although her face was wan,
  She girded on her golden belt,
She took her jewelled ivory fan,
  And at her glowing missal knelt.

Then rose, "And am I mad?" she said:
  She broke her fan, her belt untied;
With leather girt herself instead,
  And stuck a dagger at her side.

She waited, shuddering in her room,
  Till sleep had fallen on all the house.
She never flinched; she faced her doom:
  They two must sin to keep their vows.

Then out into the night she went,
  And, stooping, crept by hedge and tree;
Her rose-bush flung a snare of scent,
  And caught a happy memory.

She fell, and lay a minute's space;
  She tore the sward in her distress;
The dewy grass refreshed her face;
  She rose and ran with lifted dress.

She started like a morn-caught ghost
  Once when the moon came out and stood
To watch; the naked road she crossed,
  And dived into the murmuring wood.

The branches snatched her streaming cloak;
  A live thing shrieked; she made no stay!
She hurried to the trysting-oak —
  Right well she knew the way.

Without a pause she bared her breast,
  And drove the dagger home and fell,
And lay like one that takes her rest,
  And died and wakened up in hell.

She bathed her spirit in the flame,
  And near the centre took her post;
From all sides to her ears there came
  The dreary anguish of the lost.

The devil started at her side,
  Comely, and tall, and black as jet.
"I am young Malespina's bride;
  Has he come hither yet?"

"My poppet, welcome to your bed."
  "Is Malespina here?"
"Not he! To-morrow he must wed
  His cousin Blanche, my dear!"

"You lie, he died with me to-night."
"Not he! It was a plot." . . . "You lie."
"My dear, I never lie outright."
"We died at midnight, he and I."

The devil went. Without a groan
She, gathered up in one fierce prayer,
Took root in hell's midst all alone,
And waited for him there.

She dared to make herself at home
Amidst the wail, the uneasy stir.
The blood-stained flame that filled the dome,
Scentless and silent, shrouded her.

How long she stayed I cannot tell;
But when she felt his perfidy,
She marched across the floor of hell;
And all the damned stood up to see.

The devil stopped her at the brink:
She shook him off; she cried, "Away!"
"My dear, you have gone mad, I think."
"I was betrayed: I will not stay."

Across the weltering deep she ran;
A stranger thing was never seen:
The damned stood silent to a man;
They saw the great gulf set between.

To her it seemed a meadow fair;
And flowers sprang up about her feet.
She entered heaven; she climbed the stair
And knelt down at the mercy-seat.

Seraphs and saints with one great voice
Welcomed that soul that knew not fear.
Amazed to find it could rejoice,
Hell raised a hoarse, half-human cheer.

John Davidson

THE ROSE OF THE WORLD [1]

1892

Who dreamed that beauty passes like a dream?
For these red lips, with all their mournful pride,
Mournful that no new wonder may betide,
Troy passed away in one high funeral gleam,
And Usna's children died.

We and the laboring world are passing by:
Amid men's souls, that waver and give place,
Like the pale waters in their wintry race,
Under the passing stars, frame of the sky,
Lives on this lonely face.

Bow down, archangels, in your dim abode:
Before you were, or any hearts to beat,
Weary and kind, one lingered by His seat;
He made the world to be a grassy road
Before her wandering feet.

William Butler Yeats

THE HOST OF THE AIR [1]

1899

O'Driscoll drove with a song,
The wild duck and the drake,

[1] From *Poems*, vol. I. Copyright, 1906, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

From the tall and the tufted reeds
Of the drear Hart Lake.

And he saw how the reeds grew dark
At the coming of night tide,
And dreamed of the long dim hair
Of Bridget his bride.

He heard while he sang and dreamed
A piper piping away,
And never was piping so sad,
And never was piping so gay.

And he saw young men and young girls
Who danced on a level place
And Bridget his bride among them,
With a sad and a gay face.

The dancers crowded about him,
And many a sweet thing said,
And a young man brought him red wine
And a young girl white bread.

But Bridget drew him by the sleeve,
Away from the merry bands,
To old men playing at cards
With a twinkling of ancient hands.

The bread and the wine had a doom,
For these were the host of the air;
He sat and played in a dream
Of her long dim hair.

He played with the merry old men
And thought not of evil chance,

Until one bore Bridget his bride
Away from the merry dance.

He bore her away in his arms,
The handsomest young man there,
And his neck and his breast and his arms
Were drowned in her long dim hair.

O'Driscoll scattered the cards
And out of his dream awoke:
Old men and young men and young girls
Were gone like a drifting smoke;

But he heard high up in the air
A piper piping away,
And never was piping so sad,
And never was piping so gay.

William Butler Yeats

THE SONG OF WANDERING AENGUS [1]

1899

I went out to the hazel wood,
Because a fire was in my head,
And cut and peeled a hazel wand,
And hooked a berry with a thread,
And when white moths were on the wing,
And moth-like stars were flickering out,
I dropped the berry in a stream
And caught a little silver trout.

When I had laid it on the floor
I went to blow the fire a-flame,

[1] From *Poems*, vol. I. Copyright, 1906, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

But something rustled on the floor,
And someone called me by my name:
It had become a glimmering girl
With apple blossoms in her hair
Who called me by my name and ran
And faded through the brightening air.

Though I am old with wandering
Through hollow lands and hilly lands,
I will find out where she has gone,
And kiss her lips and take her hands;
And walk among long dappled grass,
And pluck till time and times are done,
The silver apples of the moon,
The golden apples of the sun.

William Butler Yeats

VITAE SUMMA BREVIS SPEM NOS VETAT INCOHARE LONGAM

1896

They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
Love and desire and hate:
I think they have no portion in us after
We pass the gate.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses:
Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
Within a dream.

Ernest Dowson

THE OXEN [1]

Date?

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
"Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If some one said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.

Thomas Hardy

IN TIME OF "THE BREAKING OF NATIONS" [1]

"*Breaking of Nations.*" Cf. JER. LI, 20

1915

Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.

[1] From *Collected Poems*. Copyright, 1925, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.
barton, farmyard. *coomb*, combe, a hollow in a hillside.

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass;
Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties pass.

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by:
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

Thomas Hardy

WEATHERS [1]

Date?

This is the weather the cuckoo likes,
And so do I:
When showers benumble the chestnut spikes,
And nestlings fly;
And the little brown nightingale bills his best,
And they sit outside the "Traveller's Rest,"
And maids come forth sprig-muslin drest,
And citizens dream of the South and West,
And so do I.

This is the weather the shepherd shuns,
And so do I:
When beeches drip in browns and duns,
And thresh, and ply;
And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,
And meadow rivulets overflow,
And drops on gate-bars hang in a row,
And rooks in families homeward go,
And so do I.

Thomas Hardy

[1] From *Collected Poems*. Copyright, 1925, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

LOVELIEST OF TREES

1896

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

A. E. Housman

WHEN I WAS ONE-AND-TWENTY

1896

When I was one-and-twenty
I heard a wise man say,
"Give crowns and pounds and guineas
But not your heart away;
Give pearls away and rubies
But keep your fancy free."
But I was one-and-twenty,
No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty
I heard him say again,
"The heart out of the bosom
Was never given in vain;

'Tis paid with sighs a plenty
And sold for endless rue."
And I am two-and-twenty,
And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true.

A. E. Housman

WITH RUE MY HEART IS LADEN

c. 1896

With rue my heart is laden
For golden friends I had,
For many a rose-lipped maiden
And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping
The lightfoot boys are laid;
The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
In fields where roses fade.

A. E. Housman

THE GREAT BREATH[1]

1897

Its edges foamed with amethyst and rose,
Withers once more the old blue flower of day:
There where the ether like a diamond glows,
Its petals fade away.

A shadowy tumult stirs the dusky air;
Sparkle the delicate dews, the distant snows;
The great deep thrills — for through it everywhere
The breath of Beauty blows.

[1] From *The Candle of Vision*. Copyright, 1918, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

I saw how all the trembling ages past,
Moulded to her by deep and deeper breath,
Near'd to the hour when Beauty breathes her last
And knows herself in death.

A. E.
(*George William Russell*)

DRAKE'S DRUM[1]

1897

Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Yarnder lumes the island, yarnder lie the ships,
Wi' sailor lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,
An' the shore-lights flashin', and the night-tide dashin'
He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' ruled the Devon seas,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
"Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when the powder's runnin' low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed
them long ago."

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas
come,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.

[1] By permission, from *Admirals All* by Sir Henry Newbolt, published by E. P. Dutton & Co.

Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,
  Call him when ye sail to meet the foe;
When the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag flyin',
  They shall find him, ware and wakin', as they found
    him long ago.

Sir Henry Newbolt

I HAVE DESIRED TO GO

Bef. 1898

I have desired to go
  Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail,
  And a few lilies blow.

And I have asked to be
  Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb
  And out of the swing of the sea.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

UNMANIFEST DESTINY

1898

To what new fates, my country, far
  And unforeseen of foe or friend,
Beneath what unexpected star,
  Compelled to what unchosen end.

Across the sea that knows no beach
  The Admiral of Nations guides
Thy blind obedient keels to reach
  The harbor where thy future rides!

The guns that spoke at Lexington
  Knew not that God was planning then
The trumpet word of Jefferson
  To bugle forth the rights of men.

To them that wept and cursed Bull Run,
  What was it but despair and shame?
Who saw behind the cloud the sun?
  Who knew that God was in the flame?

Had not defeat upon defeat,
  Disaster on disaster come,
The slave's emancipated feet
  Had never marched behind the drum.

There is a Hand that bends our deeds
  To mightier issues than we planned,
Each son that triumphs, each that bleeds,
  My country, serves Its dark command.

I do not know beneath what sky
  Nor on what seas shall be thy fate;
I only know it shall be high,
  I only know it shall be great.

Richard Hovey

ENGLISH IRREGULAR: '99–'02

Chant Pagan

Me that 'ave been what I've been,
Me that 'ave gone where I've gone,
Me that 'ave seen what I've seen —
'Ow can I ever take on
With awful old England again,

An' 'ouses both sides of the street,
An' 'edges two sides of the lane,
And the parson an' "gentry" between,
An' touchin' my 'at when we meet —
Me that 'ave been what I've been?

Me that 'ave watch'd 'arf a world
'Eave up all shiny with dew,
Kopje on kop to the sun,
An' as soon as the mist let 'em through
Our 'elios winkin' like fun —
Three sides of a ninety-mile square,
Over valleys as big as a shire —
Are ye there? Are ye there? Are ye there?
An' then the blind drum of our fire . . .
An' I'm rollin' 'is lawns for the Squire,
Me!

Me that 'ave rode through the dark
Forty mile often on end,
Along the Ma'ollisberg Range,
With only the stars for my mark
An' only the night for my friend,
An' things runnin' off as you pass,
An' things jumpin' up in the grass,
An' the silence, the shine an' the size
Of the 'igh, inexpressible skies. . . .
I am takin' some letters almost
As much as a mile to the post,
An' "mind you come back with the change!"
Me!

Me that saw Baberton took
When we dropp'd through the clouds on their 'ead,
An' they 'ove the guns over and fled —

Me that was through Di'mond 'Ill,
An' Pieters an' Springs an' Belfast —
From Dundee to Vereeniging all!
Me that stuck out to the last
(An' five bloomin' bars on my chest) —
I am doin' my Sunday-school best,
By the 'elp of the Squire an' 'is wife
(Not to mention the 'ousemaid an' cook),
To come in an' 'ands up an' be still,
An' honestly work for my bread,
My livin' in that state of life
To which it shall please God to call
Me!

Me that 'ave follow'd my trade
In the place where the Lightnin's are made,
'Twixt the Rains and the Sun and the Moon;
Me that lay down an' got up
Three years an' the sky for my roof —
That 'ave ridden my 'unger an' thirst
Six thousand raw mile on the hoof,
With the Vaal and the Orange for cup,
An' the Brandwater Basin for dish, —
Oh! it's 'ard to be'ave as they wish
(Too 'ard, an' a little too soon),
I'll 'ave to think over it first —
Me!

I will arise an' get 'ence; —
I will trek South and make sure
If it's only my fancy or not
That the sunshine of England is pale,
And the breezes of England are stale,
An' there's somethin' gone small with the lot;
For *I* know of a sun an' a wind,

An' some plains and a mountain be'ind,
An' some graves by a barb-wire fence;
An' a Dutchman I've fought 'oo might give
Me a job were I ever inclined,
To look in an' offsaddle and live
Where there's neither a road nor a tree —
But only my Maker an' me,
And I think it will kill me or cure,
So I think I will go there and see.

Rudyard Kipling

TWENTIETH CENTURY — 1900–1925

THE DONKEY

1900

"The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

"Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet."

Gilbert Keith Chesterton

THE BIRD AND THE TREE [1]

c. 1900

Blackbird, blackbird in the cage,
There's something wrong to-night.
Far off the sheriff's footfall dies,
The minutes crawl like last year's flies
Between the bars, and like an age
The hours are long to-night.

The sky is like a heavy lid
Out there beyond the door to-night.
What's that? A mutter down the street.
What's that? The sound of yells and feet.
For what you didn't do or did
You'll pay the score to-night.

[1] From *Hesperides*. Copyright, 1925, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

No use to reek with reddened sweat,
No use to whimper and to sweat.
They've got the rope; they've got the guns,
They've got the courage and the guns;
An' that's the reason why to-night
No use to ask them any more.
They'll fire the answer through the door —
You're out to die to-night.

There where the lonely cross-road lies,
There is no place to make replies;
But silence, inch by inch, is there,
And the right limb for a lynch is there;
And a lean daw waits for both your eyes,
Blackbird.

Perhaps you'll meet again some place.
Look for the mask upon the face;
That's the way you'll know them there —
A white mask to hide the face.
And you can halt and show them there
The things that they are deaf to now,
And they can tell you what they meant —
To wash the blood with blood. But how
If you are innocent?

Blackbird singer, blackbird mute,
They choked the seed you might have found.
Out of a thorny field you go —
For you it may be better so —
And leave the sowers of the ground
To eat the harvest of the fruit,
Blackbird.

Ridgely Torrence

GOOD FRIDAY NIGHT

1898

At last the bird that sang so long
In twilight circles, hushed his song:
Above the ancient square
The stars came here and there.

Good Friday night! Some hearts were bowed,
But some amid the waiting crowd
Because of too much youth
Felt not the mystic ruth;

And of these hearts my heart was one:
Nor when beneath the arch of stone
With dirge and candle flame
The cross of passion came,

Did my glad spirit feel reproof,
Though on the awful tree aloof,
Unspiritual, dead,
Drooped the ensanguined Head.

To one who stood where myrtles made
A little space of deeper shade
(As I could half descry,
A stranger, even as I),

I said, "These youths who bear along
The symbols of their Saviour's wrong,
The spear, the garment torn,
The flaggel, and the thorn, —

"Why do they make this mummery?
Would not a brave man gladly die

For a much smaller thing
Than to be Christ and king?"

He answered nothing, and I turned.
Throned in its hundred candles burned
The jeweled eidolon
Of her who bore the Son.

The crowd was prostrate; still, I felt
No shame until the stranger knelt;
Then not to kneel, almost
Seemed like a vulgar boast.

I knelt. The doll-face, waxen white,
Flowered out a living dimness; bright
Dawned the dear mortal grace
Of my own mother's face.

When we were risen up, the street
Was vacant; all the air hung sweet
With lemon-flowers; and soon
The sky would hold the moon.

More silently than new-found friends
To whom much silence makes amends
For the much babble vain
While yet their lives were twain,

We walked along the odorous hill.
The light was little yet; his will
I could not see to trace
Upon his form or face.

So when aloft the gold moon broke,
I cried, heart-stung. As one who woke

He turned unto my cries
The anguish of his eyes.

"Friend! Master!" I cried falteringly,
"Thou seest the thing they make of thee.
Oh, by the light divine
My mother shares with thine,

"I beg that I may lay my head
Upon thy shoulder and be fed
With thoughts of brotherhood!"
So through the odorous wood,

More silently than friends new-found
We walked. At the first meadow bound
His figure ashen-stoled
Sank in the moon's broad gold.

William Vaughn Moody

PANDORA'S SONG

c. 1901

I stood within the heart of God;
It seemed a place I had known:
(I was blood-sister to the clod,
Blood-brother to the stone,)

I found my love and labor there,
My house, my raiment, meat and wine,
My ancient rage, my old despair, —
Yea, all things that were mine.

I saw the spring and summer pass,
The trees grow bare, and winter come;
All was the same as once it was
Upon my hills at home.

Then suddenly in my own heart
I felt God walk and gaze about;
He spoke; his words seemed held apart
With gladness and with doubt.

"Here is my meat and wine," He said,
"My love, my toil, my ancient care;
Here is my cloak, my book, my bed,
And here my old despair.

"Here are my seasons: winter, spring,
Summer the same, and autumn spills
The fruits I look for; everything
As on my heavenly hills."

William Vaughn Moody (in *The Fire-Bringer*)

SEA–FEVER [1]

c. 1901

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a gray mist on the sea's face and a gray dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

[1] From *The Story of A Round House*. Copyright, 1913, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

I must go down to the seas again to the vagrant gipsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

John Masefield

CARGOES [1]

1903, 1922

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir,
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green shores,
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke stack,
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
Road-rails, pig-lead,
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

John Masefield

[1] From *The Story of A Round House*. Copyright, 1913, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.
Ivory, etc. Cf. 1 Kings, x, 22.

ISAAC AND ARCHIBALD [1]

1902

Isaac and Archibald were two old men.
I knew them, and I may have laughed at them
A little; but I must have honored them
For they were old, and they were good to me.

I do not think of either of them now,
Without remembering, infallibly,
A journey that I made one afternoon
With Isaac to find out what Archibald
Was doing with his oats. It was high time
Those oats were cut, said Isaac; and he feared
That Archibald — well, he could never feel
Quite sure of Archibald. Accordingly
The good old man invited me — that is,
Permitted me — to go along with him;
And I, with a small boy's adhesiveness
To competent old age, got up and went.
I do not know that I cared overmuch
For Archibald's or anybody's oats,
But Archibald was quite another thing,
And Isaac yet another; and the world
Was wide, and there was gladness everywhere.

We walked together down the River Road
With all the warmth and wonder of the land
Around us, and the wayside flash of leaves, —
And Isaac said the day was glorious;
But somewhere at the end of the first mile
I found that I was figuring to find
How those long ancient legs of his would keep

[1] From *Captain Craig*. Copyright, 1915, by the Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

The pace that he had set for them. The sun
Was hot, and I was ready to sweat blood;
But Isaac, for aught I could make of him,
Was cool to his hat-band. So I said then
With a dry gasp of affable despair,
Something about the scorching days we have
In August without knowing it sometimes;
But Isaac said the day was like a dream,
And praised the Lord, and talked about the breeze.
I made a fair confession of the breeze,
And crowded casually on his thought
The nearness of a profitable nook
That I could see. First I was half inclined
To caution him that he was growing old,
But something that was not compassion soon
Made plain the folly of all subterfuge.
Isaac was old, but not so old as that.

So I proposed, without an overture,
That we be seated in the shade a while,
And Isaac made no murmur. Soon the talk
Was turned on Archibald, and I began
To feel some premonitions of a kind
That only childhood knows; for the old man
Had looked at me and clutched me with his eye,
And asked if I had ever noticed things.
I told him that I could not think of them,
And I knew then, by the frown that left his face
Unsatisfied, that I had injured him.
"My good young friend," he said, "you cannot feel
What I have seen so long. You have the eyes —
Oh, yes — but you have not the other things:
The sight within that never will deceive,
You do not know — you have no right to know;
The twilight warning of experience,

The singular idea of loneliness, —
These are not yours. But they have long been mine,
And they have shown me now for seven years
That Archibald is changing. It is not
So much that he should come to his last hand,
And leave the game, and go the old way down;
But I have known him in and out so long,
And I have seen so much of good in him
That other men have shared and have not seen,
And I have gone so far through thick and thin,
Through cold and fire with him, that now it brings
To this old heart of mine an ache that you
Have not yet lived enough to know about.
But even unto you, with your boy's faith,
Your freedom, and your untried confidence,
A time will come to find out what it means
To know that you are being left behind;
And then the long contempt of innocence —
God bless you, boy! — don't think the worse of it
Because an old man chatters in the shade —
Will all be like a story you have read
In childhood and remembered for the pictures.
And when the best friend of your life goes down,
When first you know in him the slackening
That comes, and coming always tells the end, —
Now in a common word that would have passed
Uncaught from any other lips than his,
Now in some trivial act of every day,
Done as he might have done it all along
But for a twinging little difference
That bites you like a squirrel's teeth — oh, yes,
Then you will understand it well enough.
But oftener it comes in other ways;
It comes without your knowing when it comes;
You know that he is changing, and you know

That he is going — just as I know now
That Archibald is going and that I
Am staying. . . . Look at me, my boy,
And when the time shall come for you to see
That I must follow after him, try then
To think of me, to bring me back again,
Just as I am to-day. Think of the place
Where we are sitting now, and think of me —
Think of old Isaac as you knew him then,
When you set out with him in August once
To see old Archibald." — The words come back
Almost as Isaac must have uttered them,
And there comes with them a dry memory
Of something in my throat that would not move.

If you had asked me then to tell just why
I made so much of Isaac and the things
He said, I should have gone far for an answer;
For I knew it was not sorrow that I felt,
Whatever I may have wished it, or tried then
To make myself believe. My mouth was full
Of words, and they would have been comforting
To Isaac, spite of my twelve years, I think;
But there was not in me the willingness
To speak them out. Therefore I watched the ground;
And I was wondering what made the Lord
Create a thing so nervous as an ant,
When Isaac, with commendable unrest,
Ordained that we should take the road again —
For it was yet three miles to Archibald's,
And one to the first pump. I felt relieved
All over when the old man told me that;
I felt that he had stilled a fear of mine
That those extremities of heat and cold
Which he had long gone through with Archibald

Had made the man impervious to both;
But Isaac had a desert somewhere in him,
And at the pump he thanked God for all things
That he had put on earth for men to drink,
And he drank well, — so well that I proposed
That we go slowly lest I learn too soon
The bitterness of being left behind,
And all those other things. That was a joke
To Isaac, and it pleased him very much;
And that pleased me — for I was twelve years old.

At the end of an hour's walking after that
The cottage of old Archibald appeared.
Little and white and high on a smooth round hill
It stood, with hackmatacks and apple-trees
Before it, and a big barn-roof beyond;
And over the place — trees, houses, fields, and all —
Hovered an air of still simplicity
And a fragrance of old summers — the old style
That lives the while it passes. I dare say
That I was highly conscious of all this
When Isaac, of a sudden, stopped himself,
And for the long first quarter of a minute
Gazed with incredulous eyes, forgetful quite
Of breezes and of me and of all else
Under the scorching sun but a smooth-cut field,
Faint yellow in the distance. I was young,
But there were a few things that I could see,
And this was one of them? — "Well, well!" said he;
And "Archibald will be surprised, I think,"
Said I. But all my childhood subtlety
Was lost on Isaac, for he strode along
Like something out of Homer — Powerful
And awful on the wayside, so I thought.
Also I thought how good it was to be

So near the end of my short-legged endeavor
To keep the pace with Isaac for five miles.

Hardly had we turned in from the main road
When Archibald, with one hand on his back
And the other clutching his huge-headed cane,
Came limping down to meet us. — "Well! well! well!"
Said he; and then he looked at my red face,
All streaked with dust and sweat, and shook my hand,
And said it must have been a right smart walk
That we had had that day from Tilbury Town. —
"Magnificent," said Isaac; and he told
About the beautiful west wind there was
Which cooled and clarified the atmosphere.
"You must have made it with your legs, I guess,"
Said Archibald; and Isaac humored him
With one of these infrequent smiles of his
Which he kept in reserve, apparently,
For Archibald alone. "But why," said he,
"Should Providence have cider in the world
If not for such an afternoon as this?"
And Archibald, with a soft light in his eyes,
Replied that if he chose to go down cellar,
There he would find eight barrels — one of which
Was newly tapped, he said, and to his taste
An honor to the fruit. Isaac approved
Most heartily of that, and guided us
Forthwith, as if his venerable feet
Were measuring the turf in his own door-yard,
Straight to the open rollway. Down we went,
Out of the fiery sunshine to the gloom,
Grateful and half sepulchral, where we found
The barrels, like eight potent sentinels,
Close ranged along the wall. From one of them
A bright pine spile stuck out alluringly,

And on the black flat stone, just under it,
Glimmered a late-spilled proof that Archibald
Had spoken from unfeigned experience.
There was a fluted antique water-glass
Close by, and in it, prisoned, or at rest,
There was a cricket, of the brown soft sort
That feeds on darkness. Isaac turned him out,
And touched him with his thumb to make him jump,
And then composedly pulled out the plug
With such a practiced hand that scarce a drop
Did even touch his fingers. Then he drank
And smacked his lips with a slow patronage
And looked along the line of barrels there
With a pride that may have been forgetfulness:
"I never twist a spigot nowadays,"
He said, and raised the glass up to the light,
"But I thank God for orchards." And that glass
Was filled repeatedly for the same hand
Before I thought it worth while to discern
Again that I was young, and that old age,
With all his woes, has some advantages.

"Now, Archibald," said Isaac, when we stood
Outside again, "I have it in my mind
That I shall take a sort of little walk —
To stretch my legs and see what you are doing.
You stay and rest your back and tell the boy
A story: Tell him all about the time
In Stafford's cabin forty years ago,
When four of us were snowed up for ten days
With only one dried haddock. Tell him all
About it, and be wary of your back.
Now I will go along." — I looked up then
At Archibald, and as I looked I saw

[1] *Stafford's cabin.* See the poem *Stafford's Cabin*, by Mr. Robinson.

The way his nostrils widened once or twice
And then grew narrow. I can hear to-day
The way the old man chuckled to himself —
Not wholesomely, not wholly to convince
Another of his mirth, — as I can hear
The lonely sigh that followed. — But at length
He said: "The orchard now's the place for us;
We may find something like an apple there,
And we shall have the shade, at any rate."
So there we went and there we laid ourselves
Where the sunlight could not reach us; and I champed
A dozen of worm-blighted astrakhans
While Archibald said nothing — merely told
The tale of Stafford's cabin, which was good,
Though "master chilly" — after his own phrase —
Even for a day like that. But other thoughts
Were moving in his mind, imperative,
And writhing to be spoken: I could see
The glimmer of them in a glance or two,
Cautious, or else unconscious, that he gave
Over his shoulder: . . . "Stafford and the rest
Would have had no story of their own to tell;
They would have left it all for others — yes —
But that's an old song now, and Archibald
And Isaac are old men. Remember, boy,
That we are old. Whatever we have gained,
Or lost, or thrown away, we are old men.
You look before you and we look behind,
And we are playing life out in the shadow —
But that's not all of it. The sunshine lights
A good road yet before us if we look,
And we are doing that when least we know it;
For both of us are children of the sun,
Like you, and like the weed there at your feet.
The shadow calls us, and it frightens us —

We think; but there's a light behind the stars
And we old fellows who have dared to live,
We see it — and we see the other things,
The other things. . . . Yes, I have seen it come
These eight years, and these ten years, and I know
Now that it cannot be for very long
That Isaac will be Isaac. You have seen —
Young as you are, you must have seen the strange
Uncomfortable habit of the man?
He'll take my nerves and tie them in a knot
Sometimes, and that's not Isaac. I know that —
And I know what it is: I get it here
A little, in my knees, and Isaac — here."
The old man shook his head regretfully
And laid his knuckles three times on his forehead.
"That's what it is: Isaac is not quite right.
You see it, but you don't know what it means:
The thousand little differences — no,
You do not know them, and it's well you don't;
You'll know them soon enough — God bless you, boy! —
You'll know them then, but not all of them — not all.
So think of them as little as you can:
There's nothing in them for you, or for me —
But I am old and I must think of them;
I'm in the shadow, but I don't forget
The light, my boy, — the light behind the stars.
Remember that: remember that I said it;
And when the time that you think far away
Shall come for you to say it — say it, boy;
Let there be no confusion or distrust
In you, no snarling of a life half lived,
Nor any cursing over broken things
That your complaint has been the ruin of.
Live to see clearly and the light will come

To you, and as you need it. — But there, there,
I'm going it again, as Isaac says,
And I'll stop now before you go to sleep. —
Only be sure that you growl cautiously,
And always where the shadow may not reach you."

Never shall I forget, long as I live,
The quaint crack in Archibald's old voice,
The lonely twinkle in his little eyes,
Or the way it made me feel to be with him.
I know I lay and looked for a long time
Down through the orchard and across the road,
Across the river and the sun-scorched hills
That ceased in a blue forest, where the world
Ceased with it. Now and then my fancy caught
A flying glimpse of a good life beyond —
Something of ships and sunlight, streets and singing,
Troy falling, and the ages coming back,
And ages coming forward: Archibald
And Isaac were good fellows in old clothes
And Agamemnon was a friend of mine;
Ulysses coming home again to shoot
With bows and feathered arrows made another,
And all was as it should be. I was young.

So I lay dreaming of what things I would,
Calm and incorrigibly satisfied
With apples and romance and ignorance,
And the still smoke from Archibald's clay pipe.
There was a stillness over everything,
As if the spirit of heat had laid its hand
Upon the world and hushed it; and I felt
Within the mightiness of the white sun
That smote the land around us and wrought out
A fragrance from the trees, a vital warmth

And fulness for the time that was to come,
And a glory for the world beyond the forest.
The present and the future and the past,
Isaac and Archibald, the burning bush,
The Trojans and the walls of Jericho,
Were beautifully fused; and all went well
Till Archibald began to fret for Isaac
And said it was a master day for sunstroke.
That was enough to make a mummy smile,
I thought; and I remained hilarious,
In face of all precedence and respect,
Till Isaac (who had come to us unheard)
Found he had no tobacco, looked at me
Peculiarly, and asked of Archibald
What ailed the boy to make him chirrup so.
From that he told us what a blessed world
The Lord had given us. — "But, Archibald,"
He added, with a sweet severity
That made me think of peach-skins and goose-flesh,
"I'm half afraid you cut those oats of yours
A day or two before they were well set."
"They were set well enough," said Archibald, —
And I remarked the process of his nose
Before the words came out. "But never mind
Your neighbor's oats: you stay here in the shade
And rest yourself while I go find the cards.
We'll have a little game of seven-up
And let the boy keep count." — "We'll have the game,
Assuredly," said Isaac; "and I think
That I will have a draught of cider, also." —

They marched away together towards the house
And left me to my childish ruminations
Upon the ways of men. I followed them
Down cellar with my fancy, and then left them

For a fairer vision of all things at once
That was anon to be destroyed again
By the sound of voices and of heavy feet —
One of the sounds of life that I remember,
Though I forget so many that rang first,
As if they were thrown down to me from Sinai.

So I remember, even to this day,
Just how they sounded, how they placed themselves,
And how the game went on while I made marks
And crossed them out, and meanwhile made some Trojans.
Likewise I made Ulysses, after Isaac,
And a little after Flaxman. Archibald
Was injured when he found himself left out,
But he had no heroics, and I said so:
I told him that his white beard was too long
And too straight down to be like things in Homer.
"Quite so," said Isaac. — "Low," said Archibald;
And he threw down a deuce with a deep grin
That showed his yellow teeth and made me happy.
So they played on till a bell rang from the door,
And Archibald said, "Supper." — After that
The old men smoked while I sat watching them
And wondered with all comfort what might come
To me, and what might never come to me;
And when the time came for the long walk home
With Isaac in the twilight, I could see
The forest and the sunset and the sky-line,
No matter where it was that I was looking:
The flame beyond the boundary, the music,
The foam and the white ships, and two old men
Were things that would not leave me. — And that night
There came to me a dream — a shining one,
With two old angels in it They had wings,

And they were sitting where a silver light
Suffused them, face to face. The wings of one
Began to palpitate as I approached,
But I was yet unseen when a dry voice
Cried thinly, with unpatronizing triumph,
"I've got you, Isaac; high, low, jack, and the game."

Isaac and Archibald have gone their way
To the silence of the loved and well-forgotten.
I knew them, and I may have laughed at them;
But there's a laughing that has honor in it,
And I have no regret for light words now.
Rather I think sometimes they may have made
Their sport of me; — but they would not do that,
They were too old for that. They were old men,
And I may laugh at them because I knew them.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

THE OLD WOMAN

c. 1909

As a white candle
  In a holy place
So is the beauty
  Of an aged face.

As the spent radiance
  Of the winter sun,
So is a woman
  With her travail done,

Her brood gone from her,
  And her thoughts as still
As the waters
  Under a ruined mill.

Joseph Campbell (*Seosamh MacCathmhaoil*)

A BALLADE CATALOGUE OF LOVELY THINGS

c. 1913

I would make a list against the evil days
  Of lovely things to hold in memory:
First, I set down my lady's lovely face,
  For earth has no such lovely thing as she;
  And next I add, to bear her company,
The great-eyed virgin star that morning brings;
  Then the wild-rose upon its little tree —
So runs my catalogue of lovely things.

The enchanted dog-wood, with its ivory trays,
  The water-lily in its sanctuary
Of reeded pools, and dew-drenched lilac sprays,
  For these, of all fair flowers, the fairest be;
  Next I write down the great name of the sea,
Lonely in greatness as the names of kings;
  Then the young moon that hath us all in fee —
So runs my catalogue of lovely things.

Imperial sunsets that in crimson blaze
  Along the hills, and, fairer still to me,
The fireflies dancing in a netted maze
  Woven of twilight and tranquillity;
  Shakespeare and Virgil, their high poesy;
Then a great ship, splendid with snowy wings,
  Voyaging on into eternity —
So runs my catalogue of lovely things.

Envoi

Prince, not the gold bars of thy treasury,
  Not all thy jewelled sceptres, crowns, and rings,
Are worth the honeycomb of the wild bee —
  So runs my catalogue of lovely things.

Richard Le Gallienne

THE LISTENERS

1912

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor;
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller's head;
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
"Is there anybody there?" he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head: —
"Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word," he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake:

Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

Walter de la Mare

AN EPITAPH

1912 (?)

Here lies a most beautiful lady:
Light of step and heart was she;
I think she was the most beautiful lady
That ever was in the West Country.
But beauty vanishes; beauty passes;
However rare — rare it be;
And when I crumble, who will remember
This lady of the West Country?

Walter de la Mare

STUPIDITY STREET [1]

c. 1913

I saw with open eyes
Singing birds sweet
Sold in the shops
For the people to eat,
Sold in the shops of
Stupidity Street.

I saw in vision
The worm in the wheat,
And in the shops nothing
For people to eat;
Nothing for sale in
Stupidity Street.

Ralph Hodgson

[1] From *Poems*. Copyright, 1917, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

EVE [1]

c. 1913

Eve, with her basket, was
Deep in the bells and grass,
Wading in bells and grass
Up to her knees.
Picking a dish of sweet
Berries and plums to eat,
Down in the bells and grass
Under the trees.

Mute as a mouse in a
Corner the cobra lay,
Curled round a bough of the
Cinnamon tall. . . .
Now to get even and
Humble proud heaven and
Now was the moment or
Never at all.

"Eva!" Each syllable
Light as a flower fell,
"Eva!" he whispered the
Wondering maid,
Soft as a bubble sung
Out of a linnet's lung,
Soft and most silverly
"Eva!" he said.

Picture that orchard sprite;
Eve, with her body white,
Supple and smooth to her
Slim finger tips;

[1] From *Poems*. Copyright, 1917, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

Wondering, listening,
Listening, wondering,
Eve with a berry
Half-way to her lips.

Oh, had our simple Eve
Seen through the make-believe!
Had she but known the
Pretender he was!
Out of the boughs he came,
Whispering still her name,
Tumbling in twenty rings
Into the grass.

Here was the strangest pair
In the world anywhere,
Eve in the bells and grass
Kneeling, and he
Telling his story low. . . .
Singing birds saw them go
Down the dark path to
The Blasphemous Tree.

Oh, what a clatter when
Titmouse and Jenny Wren
Saw him successful and
Taking his leave!
How the birds rated him,
How they all hated him!
How they all pitied
Poor motherless Eve!

Picture her crying
Outside in the lane,

Eve, with no dish of sweet
Berries and plums to eat,
Haunting the gate of the
Orchard in vain. . . .
Picture the lewd delight
Under the hill to-night —
"Eva!" the toast goes round,
"Eva!" again.

Ralph Hodgson

GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH ENTERS INTO HEAVEN [1]

1913

(*To be sung to the tune of* The Blood of the Lamb *with indicated instrument*)

(*Bass drum beaten loudly*)
Booth led boldly with his big bass drum —
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
The Saints smiled gravely and they said: "He's come."
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
Walking lepers followed, rank on rank,
Lurching bravoes from the ditches dank,
Drabs from the alleyways and drug fiends pale —
Minds still passion-ridden, soul-powers frail: —
Vermin-eaten saints with mouldy breath,
Unwashed legions with the ways of Death —
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

(*Banjos*)
Every slum had sent its half-a-score
The round world over. (Booth had groaned for more.)
Every banner that the wide world flies
Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes.

[1] From *General William Booth Enters into Heaven*. Copyright, 1913, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

Big-voiced lasses made their banjos bang,
Tranced, fanatical they shrieked and sang: —
"Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?"
Hallelujah! It was queer to see
Bull-necked convicts with that land make free.
Loons with trumpets blowed a blare, blare, blare
On, on upward thro' the golden air!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

(*Bass drum slower and softer*)
Booth died blind and still by Faith he trod,
Eyes still dazzled by the ways of God.
Booth led boldly, and he looked the chief,
Eagle countenance in sharp relief,
Beard a-flying, air of high command
Unabated in that holy land.

(*Sweet flute music*)
Jesus came from out the court-house door,
Stretched his hands above the passing poor.
Booth saw not, but led his queer ones there
Round and round the mighty court-house square.
Yet in an instant all the blear review
Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new,
The lame were straightened, withered limbs uncurled
And blind eyes opened on a new, sweet world.

(*Bass drum louder*)
Drabs and vixens in a flash made whole!
Gone was the weasel-head, the snout, the jowl!
Sages and sibyls now, and athletes clean,
Rulers of empires, and of forests green!

(*Grand chorus of all instruments. Tambourines to the foreground*)
The hosts were sandalled, and their wings were fire!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
But their noise played havoc with the angel-choir.
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
O, shout Salvation! It was good to see
Kings and Princes by the Lamb set free.
The banjos rattled and the tambourines
Jing-jing-jingled in the hands of Queens.

(*Reverently sung, no instruments*)
And when Booth halted by the curb for prayer
He saw his Master thro' the flag-filled air.
Christ came gently with a robe and crown
For Booth the soldier, while the throng knelt down.
He saw King Jesus. They were face to face,
And he knelt a-weeping in that holy place.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Nicholas Vachel Lindsay

DOORS [1]

1913

Like a young child who to his mother's door
  Runs eager for the welcoming embrace,
  And finds the door shut, and with troubled face
Calls and through sobbing calls, and o'er and o'er
Calling, storms at the panel — so before
  A door that will not open, sick and numb,
  I listen for a word that will not come,
And know, at last, I may not enter more.

[1] From *Poems and Ballads*. Copyright, 1913, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

Silence! And through the silence and the dark
By that closed door, the distant sob of tears
Beats on my spirit, as on fairy shores
The spectral sea; and through the sobbing — hark! —
Down the far-chambered corridor of years,
The quiet shutting, one by one, of doors.

Hermann Hagedorn

CINQUAINS

1913

TRIAD

These be
Three silent things:
The falling snow . . . the hour
Before the dawn . . . the mouth of one
Just dead.

THE WARNING

Just now,
Out of the strange
Still dusk . . . as strange, as still . . .
A white moth flew. Why am I grown
So cold?

Adelaide Crapsey

ON SEEING WEATHER-BEATEN TREES

Is it as plainly in our living shown,
By slant and twist, which way the wind has blown?

Adelaide Crapsey

THE DEATH OF THE HIRED MAN

1914

Mary sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table
Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step,
She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage
To meet him in the doorway with the news
And put him on his guard. "Silas is back."
She pushed him outward with her through the door
And shut it after her. "Be kind," she said.
She took the market things from Warren's arms
And set them on the porch, then drew him down
To sit beside her on the wooden steps.

"When was I ever anything but kind to him?
But I'll not have the fellow back," he said.
"I told him so last haying, didn't I?
'If he left then,' I said, 'that ended it.'
What good is he? Who else will harbor him
At his age for the little he can do?
What help he is there's no depending on.
Off he goes always when I need him most.
'He thinks he ought to earn a little pay,
Enough at least to buy tobacco with,
So he won't have to beg and be beholden.'
'All right,' I say, 'I can't afford to pay
Any fixed wages, though I wish I could.'
'Someone else can.' 'Then someone else will have to.'
I shouldn't mind his bettering himself
If that was what it was. You can be certain,
When he begins like that, there's someone at him
Trying to coax him off with pocket-money, —
In haying time, when any help is scarce.
In winter he comes back to us. I'm done."

"Sh! not so loud: he'll hear you," Mary said.

"I want him to: he'll have to soon or late."

"He's worn out. He's asleep beside the stove.
When I came up from Rowe's I found him here,
Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep,
A miserable sight, and frightening, too —
You needn't smile — I didn't recognize him —
I wasn't looking for him — and he's changed.
Wait till you see."

"Where did you say he'd been?"

"He didn't say. I dragged him to the house,
And gave him tea and tried to make him smoke.
I tried to make him talk about his travels,
Nothing would do: he just kept nodding off."

"What did he say? Did he say anything?"

"But little."

"Anything? Mary, confess
He said he'd come to ditch the meadow for me."

"Warren!"

"But did he? I just want to know."

"Of course he did. What would you have him say?
Surely you wouldn't grudge the poor old man
Some humble way to save his self-respect.
He added, if you really care to know,
He meant to clear the upper pasture, too.

That sounds like something you have heard before?
Warren, I wish you could have heard the way
He jumbled everything. I stopped to look
Two or three times — he made me feel so queer —
To see if he was talking in his sleep.
He ran on Harold Wilson — you remember—
The boy you had in haying four years since.
He's finished school, and teaching in his college.
Silas declares you'll have to get him back.
He says they two will make a team for work:
Between them they will lay this farm as smooth!
The way he mixed that in with other things.
He thinks young Wilson a likely lad, though daft
On education — you know how they fought
All through July under the blazing sun,
Silas up on the cart to build the load,
Harold along beside to pitch it on."

"Yes, I took care to keep well out of earshot."

"Well, those days trouble Silas like a dream.
You wouldn't think they would. How some things linger!
Harold's young college boy's assurance piqued him.
After so many years he still keeps finding
Good arguments he sees he might have used.
I sympathize. I know just how it feels
To think of the right thing to say too late.
Harold's associated in his mind with Latin.
He asked me what I thought of Harold's saying
He studied Latin like the violin
Because he liked it — that an argument!
He said he couldn't make the boy believe
He could find water with a hazel prong —
Which showed how much good school had ever done him.

He wanted to go over that. But most of all
He thinks if he could have another chance
To teach him how to build a load of hay —"

"I know, that's Silas' one accomplishment.
He bundles every forkful in its place,
And tags and numbers it for future reference,
So he can find and easily dislodge it
In the unloading. Silas does that well.
He takes it out in bunches like birds' nests.
You never see him standing on the hay
He's trying to lift, straining to lift himself."

"He thinks if he could teach him that, he'd be
Some good perhaps to someone in the world.
He hates to see a boy the fool of books.
Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk,
And nothing to look backward to with pride,
And nothing to look forward to with hope,
So now and never any different."

Part of a moon was falling down the west,
Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills.
Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw
And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand
Among the harp-like morning-glory strings,
Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves,
As if she played unheard the tenderness
That wrought on him beside her in the night.
"Warren," she said, "he has come home to die:
You needn't be afraid he'll leave you this time."

"Home," he mocked gently.

"Yes, what else but home?

It all depends on what you mean by home.
Of course he's nothing to us, any more
Than was the hound that came a stranger to us
Out of the woods, worn out upon the trail."

"Home is the place where, when you have to go there,
They have to take you in."

"I should have called it
Something you somehow haven't to deserve."

Warren leaned out and took a step or two,
Picked up a little stick, and brought it back
And broke it in his hand and tossed it by.
"Silas has better claim on us, you think,
Than on his brother? Thirteen little miles
As the road winds would bring him to his door.
Silas has walked that far no doubt to-day.
Why didn't he go there? His brother's rich,
A somebody — director in the bank."

"He never told us that."

"We know it though."

"I think his brother ought to help, of course.
I'll see to that if there is need. He ought of right
To take him in, and might be willing to —
He may be better than appearances.
But have some pity on Silas. Do you think
If he had any pride in claiming kin
Or anything he looked for from his brother,
He'd keep so still about him all this time?"

"I wonder what's between them."

"I can tell you.

Silas is what he is — we wouldn't mind him —
But just the kind that kinsfolk can't abide.
He never did a thing so very bad.
He don't know why he isn't quite as good
As anyone. He won't be made ashamed
To please his brother, worthless though he is."

"I can't think Si ever hurt anyone."

"No, but he hurt my heart the way he lay
And rolled his old head on that sharp-edged chair-back.
He wouldn't let me put him on the lounge.
You must go in and see what you can do.
I made the bed up for him there to-night.
You'll be surprised at him — how much he's broken.
His working days are done; I'm sure of it."

"I'd not be in a hurry to say that."

"I haven't been. Go, look, see for yourself.
But, Warren, please remember how it is:
He's come to help you ditch the meadow.
He has a plan. You mustn't laugh at him.
He may not speak of it, and then he may.
I'll sit and see if that small sailing cloud
Will hit or miss the moon."

It hit the moon.
Then there were three there, making a dim row,
The moon, the silver cloud, and she.
Warren returned — too soon, it seemed to her,
Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.

"Warren?" she questioned.

"Dead," was all he answered.

Robert Frost

MENDING WALL

1914

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple-orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
'*Why* do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know

What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down!" I could say "elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there,
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness, as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

Robert Frost

STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

1923

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Robert Frost

JUNE

1914

Broom out the floor now, lay the fender by,
And plant this bee-sucked bough of woodbine there,
And let the window down. The butterfly
Floats in upon the sunbeam, and the fair
Tanned face of June, the nomad gipsy, laughs
Above her widespread wares, the while she tells
The farmers' fortunes in the fields, and quaffs
The water from the spider-peopled wells.

The hedges are all drowned in green grass seas,
And bobbing poppies flare like Elmor's light,
While siren-like the pollen-stainèd bees
Drone in the clover-depths. And up the height
The cuckoo's voice is hoarse and broke with joy
And on the lowland crops the crows make raid,
Nor fear the clappers of the farmer's boy,
Who sleeps, like drunken Noah, in the shade.

And loop this red rose in that hazel ring
That snares your little ear, for June is short
And we must joy in it and dance and sing,
And from her bounty draw her rosy worth.
Ay! soon the swallows will be flying south,
The wind wheel north to gather in the snow,
Even the roses spilt on youth's red mouth
Will soon blow down the road all roses go.

Francis Ledwidge

THE SOLDIER

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.
And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Rupert Brooke

THE HILL

Bef. 1915

Breathless, we flung us on the windy hill,
Laughed in the sun, and kissed the lovely grass.
You said, "Through glory and ecstasy we pass;
Wind, sun, and earth remain, the birds sing still,
When we are old, are old. . . ." "And when we die
All's over that is ours; and life burns on
Through other lovers, other lips," said I,
"Heart of my heart, our heaven is now, is won!"
"We are Earth's best, that learnt her lesson here.
Life is our cry. We have kept the faith!" we said;
"We shall go down with unreluctant tread
Rose-crowned into the darkness! . . ." Proud we were,

And laughed, that had such brave true things to say.
And then you suddenly cried, and turned away.

Rupert Brooke

CHORICOS

c. 1915

The ancient songs
Pass deathward mournfully.

Cold lips that sing no more, and withered wreaths,
Regretful eyes and drooping breasts and wings —
Symbols of ancient songs
Mournfully passing
Down to the great white surges,
Watched of none
Save the frail sea-birds
And the lithe pale girls,
Daughters of Okeanos.

And the songs pass
From the green land
Which lies upon the waves as a leaf
On the flowers of hyacinth;
And they pass from the waters,
The manifold winds and the dim moon,
And they come,
Silently winging through soft Kimmerian dusk,
To the quiet level lands
That she keeps for us all,
That she wrought for us all for sleep
In the silver days of the earth's dawning —
Proserpine, daughter of Zeus.

And we turn from the Kuprian's breasts,
And we turn from thee,

Phoibos Apollon,
And we turn from the music of old
And the hills that we loved and the meads,
And we turn from the fiery day,
And the lips that were over-sweet;
For silently
Brushing the fields with red-shod feet,
With purple robe
Searing the flowers as with a sudden flame,
Death,
Thou hast come upon us.

And of all the ancient songs
Passing to the swallow-blue halls
By the dark streams of Persephone,
This only remains:
That in the end we turn to thee,
Death,
That we turn to thee, singing
One last song.

O Death,
Thou art an healing wind
That blowest over white flowers
A-tremble with dew;
Thou art a wind flowing
Over long leagues of lonely sea;
Thou art the dusk and the fragrance;
Thou art the lips of love mournfully smiling:
Thou art the pale peace of one
Satiate with old desires;
Thou art the silence of beauty,
And we look no more for the morning;
We yearn no more for the sun,
Since with thy white hands,

Death,
Thou crownest us with the pallid chaplets,
The slim colorless poppies
Which in thy garden alone
Softly thou gatherest.

And silently;
And with slow feet approaching;
And with bowed head and unlit eyes,
We kneel before thee:
And thou, leaning towards us,
Caressingly layest upon us
Flowers from thy thin cold hands,
And, smiling as a chaste woman
Knowing love in her heart,
Thou sealest our eyes
And the illimitable quietude
Comes gently upon us.

Richard Aldington

SONG

c. 1915

I was so chill, and overworn, and sad,
To be a lady was the only joy I had.
I walked the street as silent as a mouse,
Buying fine clothes, and fittings for the house.

But since I saw my love
I wear a simple dress,
And happily I move
Forgetting weariness.

Anna Wickham

THE ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

1915

What passing-bells for these who died as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries for them; no prayers or bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs —
The shrill demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds.
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

Wilfred Owen

I HAVE BEEN THROUGH THE GATES [1]

c. 1916

His heart, to me, was a place of palaces and pinnacles
and shining towers;
I saw it then as we see things in dreams, — I do not
remember how long I slept;
I remember the trees, and the high, white walls, and
how the sun was always on the towers:
The walls are standing to-day, and the gates: I have
been through the gates, I have groped, I have
crept
Back, back. There is dust in the streets, and blood;
they are empty; darkness is over them;

[1] From *Saturday Market*. Copyright, 1921, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

His heart is a place with the lights gone out, forsaken
by great winds and the heavenly rain, unclean
and unswept,
Like the heart of the holy city, old, blind, beautiful
Jerusalem,
Over which Christ wept.

Charlotte Mew

THE GOING [1]

c. 1917

He's gone.
I do not understand.
I only know
That as he turned to go
And waved his hand,
In his young eyes a sudden glory shone:
And I was dazzled by a sunset glow,
And he was gone.

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson (from *Battle*)

A SIDE STREET

c. 1917

On the warm Sunday afternoons
And every evening in the Spring and Summer
When the night hurries the late home-comer
And the air grows softer, and scraps of tunes
Float from the open windows and jar
Against the voices of children and the hum of a car;
When the city noises commingle and melt
With a restless something, half-seen, half-felt —
I see them always there,
Upon the low, smooth wall before the church;

[1] From *Battle and Other Poems*. Copyright, 1916, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

That row of little girls who sit and stare
Like sparrows on a granite perch.
They come in twittering couples or walk alone
To their gray bough of stone,
Sometimes by twos and threes, sometimes as many as five —
But always they sit there on the narrow coping
Bright-eyed and solemn, scarcely hoping
To see more than what is merely moving and alive. . .
They hear the couples pass; the lisp of happy feet
Increases and the night grows suddenly sweet. . . .

.

Before the quiet church that smells of death
They sit.
And Life sweeps past them with a rushing breath
And reaches out and plucks them by the hand
And calls them boldly, whispering to each
In some strange speech
They tremble to but cannot understand.
It thrills and troubles them, as one by one,
The days run off like water through a sieve;
While, with a gaze as candid as the sun,
Poignant and puzzled and inquisitive,
They come and sit, —
A part of life and yet apart from it.

Louis Untermeyer

SOWING

1917

It was a perfect day
For sowing; just
As sweet and dry was the ground
As tobacco-dust.

I tasted deep the hour
Between the far
Owl's chuckling first soft cry
And the first star.

A long stretched hour it was;
Nothing undone
Remained; the early seeds
All safely sown.

And now, hark at the rain,
Windless and light,
Half a kiss, half a tear,
Saying good-night.

Edward Thomas

EVERYONE SANG [1]

(ARMISTICE DAY)

1918

Everyone suddenly burst out singing;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom,
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark-green fields; on — on — and out of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted;
And beauty came like the setting sun:
My heart was shaken with tears; and horror
Drifted away . . . Oh, but everyone
Was a bird; and the song was wordless — the singing will never be done.

Siegfried Sassoon

[1] By permission, from *Counter Attack* by Siegfried Sassoon; copyright by E. P. Dutton & Co.

THE WASTE PLACES[1]

c. 1918?

As a naked man I go
  Through the desert sore afraid,
Holding up my head, although
  I'm as frightened as a maid.

The crouching lion there I saw
  From barren rocks lift up his eye;
He parts the cactus with his paw,
  He stares at me as I go by.

He would follow on my trace
  If he knew I was afraid,
If he knew my hardy face
  Hides the terrors of a maid.

In the night he rises, and
  He stretches forth, he snuffs the air,
He roars, and leaps along the sand,
  He creeps and watches everywhere.

His burning eyes, his eyes of bale,
  Through the darkness I can see;
He lashes fiercely with his tail,
  He would love to spring at me.

I am the lion in his lair,
  I am the fear that frightens me;
I am the desert of despair,
  And the nights of agony.

[1] From *Songs from the Clay*. Copyright, 1915, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

Night or day, whate'er befall,
I must walk that desert land,
Until I can dare to call
The lion out to lick my hand.

James Stephens

STRINGS IN THE EARTH

c. 1918

Strings in the earth and air
Make music sweet;
Strings by the river where
The willows meet.

There's music along the river
For Love wanders there,
Pale flowers on his mantle,
Dark leaves on his hair.

All softly playing,
With head to the music bent,
And fingers playing
Upon an instrument.

James Joyce

MORNING SONG OF SENLIN

1918

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
When the light drips through the shutters like the dew,
I arise, I face the sunrise,
And do the things my fathers learned to do.
Stars in the purple dusk above the rooftops
Pale in a saffron mist and seem to die,
And I myself on a swiftly tilting planet
Stand before a glass and tie my tie.

Vine-leaves tap my window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones.

It is morning. I stand by the mirror
And tie my tie once more.
While waves far off in a pale rose twilight
Crash on a white sand shore.
I stand by a mirror and comb my hair:
How small and white my face! —
The green earth tilts through a sphere of air
And bathes in a flame of space.
There are houses hanging above the stars
And stars hung under a sea . . .
And a sun far off in a shell of silence
Dapples my walls for me. . . .

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
Should I not pause in the light to remember God?
Upright and firm I stand on a star unstable,
He is immense and lonely as a cloud.
I will dedicate this moment before my mirror
To him alone, for him I will comb my hair.
Accept these humble offerings, clouds of silence!
I will think of you as I descend the stair.

Vine-leaves tap my window,
The snail-track shines on the stones;
Dew-drops flash from the chinaberry tree
Repeating two clear tones.

It is morning, I awake from a bed of silence,
Shining I rise from the starless waters of sleep.
The walls are about me still as in the evening,

I am the same, and the same name still I keep.
The earth revolves with me, yet makes no motion,
The stars pale silently in a coral sky.
In a whistling void I stand before my mirror,
Unconcerned, and tie my tie.

There are horses neighing on far-off hills
Tossing their long white manes,
And mountains flash in the rose-white dusk,
Their shoulders black with rains. . . .
It is morning, I stand by the mirror
And surprise my soul once more;
The blue air rushes above my ceiling,
There are suns beneath my floor. . . .

. . . It is morning, Senlin says, I ascend from darkness
And depart on the winds of space for I know not where;
My watch is wound, a key is in my pocket,
The sky is darkened as I descend the stair.
There are shadows across the windows, clouds in heaven,
And a god among the stars: and I will go
Thinking of him as I might think of daybreak
And humming a tune I know. . . .

Vine-leaves tap at the window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones.

Conrad Aiken

FOG

c. 1920

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

Carl Sandburg

MONOTONE

c. 1920

The monotone of the rain is beautiful,
And the sudden rise and slow relapse
Of the long multitudinous rain.

The sun on the hills is beautiful,
Or a captured sunset, sea-flung,
Bannered with fire and gold.

A face I know is beautiful —
With fire and gold of sky and sea,
And the peace of long warm rain.

Carl Sandburg

SWEET GRASS RANGE [1]

1918

"'Come sell your pony, cowboy —
Sell your pony to me;
Braided bridle and your puncher saddle,
And spend your money free.'

'If I should sell my pony,
And ride the range no more,
Nail up my hat and my silver spurs
Above my shanty door;

[1] From *Barbed Wire and Wayfarers*. Copyright, 1934, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

'And let my door stand open wide
To the snow and the rain and sun;
And bury me under the green sweetgrass
Where you hear the river run.'"

As I came down the sweetgrass range
And by the cabin door,
I heard a singing in the early dusk
Along the river shore;

I heard a singing to the early stars,
And the tune of a pony's feet.
The joy of the riding singer
I never shall forget.

Edwin Ford Piper

LET IT BE FORGOTTEN [1]

c. 1920

Let it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten,
Forgotten as a fire that once was singing gold,
Let it be forgotten for ever and ever,
Time is a kind friend, he will make us old.

If anyone asks, say it was forgotten
Long and long ago,
As a flower, as a fire, as a hushed footfall
In a long forgotten snow.

Sara Teasdale

THE EAGLE AND THE MOLE

1921

Avoid the reeking herd,
Shun the polluted flock,

[1] From *Flame and Shadow*. Copyright, 1920, by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

Live like that stoic bird,
The eagle of the rock.

The huddled warmth of crowds
Begets and fosters hate;
He keeps, above the clouds,
His cliff inviolate.

When flocks are folded warm
And herds to shelter run,
He sails above the storm,
He stares into the sun.

If in the eagle's track
Your sinews cannot leap,
Avoid the lathered pack,
Turn from the steaming sheep.

If you would keep your soul
From spotted sight or sound,
Live like the velvet mole;
Go burrow underground.

And there hold intercourse
With roots of trees and stones,
With rivers at their source
And disembodied bones.

Elinor Wylie

THE HEART KNOWETH ITS OWN BITTERNESS

c. 1921

The heart knoweth? If this be true indeed,
Then the thing that I bear in my bosom is not a heart,

For it knows no more than a hollow, whispering reed
That answers to every wind.
I am sick of the thing. I think we had better part.

My heart would come to any piper's calling —
A fool in motley that dances for any king;
But my body knows, and its tears unbidden falling
Say that my heart has sinned.
You would have my heart? You may. I am sick
of the thing.

Aline Kilmer

EUCLID ALONE —

c. 1922 (?)

Euclid alone has looked on Beauty bare.
Let all that prate of Beauty hold their peace,
And lay them prone upon the earth, and cease
To ponder on themselves, the while they stare
At nothing, intricately drawn nowhere
In shapes of shifting lineage. Let geese
Gabble and hiss, but heroes seek release
From dusty bondage into luminous air.
Oh, blinding hour — oh, holy terrible day —
When first the shaft into his vision shone
Of light anatomized! Euclid alone
Has looked on Beauty bare: fortunate they
Who though once only, and then far away,
Have heard her massive sandal set on stone.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

HELEN

c. 1922 (?)

All Greece hates
the still eyes in the white face,

the lustre as of olives
where she stands,
and the white hands.

All Greece reviles
the wan face when she smiles,
hating it deeper still
when it grows wan and white,
remembering past enchantments
and past ills.

Greece sees unmoved,
God's daughter, born of love,
the beauty of cool feet
and slenderest knees,
could love indeed the maid,
only if she were laid,
white ash amid funereal cypresses.

H. D.

LETHE

c. 1922 (?)

Nor skin nor hide nor fleece
Shall cover you,
Nor curtain of crimson nor fine
Shelter of cedar-wood be over you,
Nor the fir-tree
Nor the pine.

Nor sight of whin nor gorse
Nor river-yew,
Nor fragrance of flowering bush,
Nor wailing of reed-bird to waken you,
Nor of linnet,
Nor of thrush.

Nor word nor touch nor sight
Of lover, you
Shall long through the night but for this:
The roll of the full tide to cover you
Without question,
Without kiss.

H. D.

SONG

1924

Where is the nightingale,
in what myrrh-wood and dim?
ah, let the night come black,
for we would conjure back
all that enchanted him,
all that enchanted him.

Where is the bird of fire?
in what packed hedge of rose?
in what roofed ledge of flower?
no other creature knows
what magic lurks within,
what magic lurks within.

Bird, bird, bird, bird, we cry,
hear, pity us in pain;
hearts break in the sunlight,
hearts break in daylight rain,
only night heals again,
only night heals again.

H. D. (from *Songs from Cyprus*)

WHIM ALLEY

1925

Whim Alley once led into Danger Court
Loud with the raucous talk of cockatoos,
Where bearded Jews a-squat in alcove shops
Sat waiting like royal falcons in a mews.
Softly as rain the voweled Portuguese
Fell from their red-ripe lips with eastern news
Of galleons whose names were melodies —
Softly — between the shrieks of cockatoos.
Who cared for royal navigation laws
In Danger Court — for what the Soldan said —
Or papal lines between the east and west?
Abram out-Shylocked Isaac with applause,
And clutched the sweated doubloons to his chest,
Whose late lamented owners were scarce dead.
For there were smugglers' bargains to be made
Where leaping arches looped along the walls,
While sunlight smouldered down the long arcade
And dizened into flame on Spanish shawls.
And what the sequin brought in Louis d'or
Was news, — and rumors passed from Trebizond,
While Rachel clinked brass anklets in a door
With a straight glimpse of blue sea just beyond.
Dark sailors passed with tang of wine and tar,
And merchants with wide hats and wider fringes,
And two black Sambos smoked the same cigar
Upon a chest with three locks and five hinges.
Vanished in air! Those arches roof a cow,
To parrots' rings the frowsy hens resort;
Whim Alley leads to less than nothing now,
For only shadows dwell in Danger Court.

Hervey Allen

LILACS

1925

Lilacs,
False blue,
White,
Purple,
Colour of lilac,
Your great puffs of flowers
Are everywhere in this my New England.
Among your heart-shaped leaves
Orange orioles hop like music-box birds and sing
Their little weak soft songs;
In the crooks of your branches
The bright eyes of song sparrows sitting on spotted eggs
Peer restlessly through the light and shadow
Of all Springs.
Lilacs in dooryards
Holding quiet conversations with an early moon;
Lilacs watching a deserted house
Settling sideways into the grass of an old road;
Lilacs, wind-beaten, staggering under a lopsided shock of bloom
Above a cellar dug into a hill.
You are everywhere.
You are everywhere.
You tapped the window when the preacher preached his sermon,
And ran along the road beside the boy going to school.
You stood by pasture-bars to give the cows good milking,
You persuaded the housewife that her dish pan was of silver
And her husband an image of pure gold.

You flaunted the fragrance of your blossoms
Through the wide doors of Custom Houses —
You, and sandal-wood, and tea,
Charging the noses of quill-driving clerks
When a ship was in from China.
You called to them: "Goose-quill men, goose-quill men,
May is a month for flitting,"
Until they writhed on their high stools
And wrote poetry on their letter-sheets behind the propped-up ledgers.
Paradoxical New England clerks,
Writing inventories in ledgers, reading the "Song of Solomon" at night,
So many verses before bed-time,
Because it was the Bible.
The dead fed you
Amid the slant stones of graveyards.
Pale ghosts who planted you
Came in the night-time
And let their thin hair blow through your clustered stems.
You are of the green sea,
And of the stone hills which reach a long distance.
You are of elm-shaded streets with little shops where they sell kites and marbles,
You are of great parks where everyone walks and nobody is at home.
You cover the blind sides of greenhouses
And lean over the top to say a hurry-word through the glass
To your friends, the grapes, inside.

Lilacs,
False blue,
White,

Purple,
Colour of lilac,
You have forgotten your Eastern origin,
The veiled women with eyes like panthers,
The swollen, aggressive turbans of jewelled Pashas.
Now you are a very decent flower.
A reticent flower,
A curiously clear-cut, candid flower,
Standing beside clean doorways,
Friendly to a house-cat and a pair of spectacles,
Making poetry out of a bit of moonlight
And a hundred or two sharp blossoms.

Maine knows you,
Has for years and years;
New Hampshire knows you,
And Massachusetts
And Vermont.
Cape Cod starts you along the beaches to Rhode Island;
Connecticut takes you from a river to the sea.
You are brighter than apples,
Sweeter than tulips,
You are the great flood of our souls
Bursting above the leaf-shapes of our hearts,
You are the smell of all summers,
The love of wives and children,
The recollection of the gardens of little children,
You are State Houses and Charters
And the familiar treading of the foot to and fro on a road it knows.
May is lilac here in New England,
May is thrush singing "Sun up!" on a tip-top ash-tree,
May is white clouds behind pine-trees
Puffed out and marching upon a blue sky.

May is green as no other,
May is much sun through small leaves,
May is soft earth,
And apple-blossoms,
And windows open to a South wind.
May is a full light wind of lilac
From Canada to Narragansett Bay.

Lilacs,
False blue,
White,
Purple,
Colour of lilac.
Heart-leaves of lilac all over New England,
Roots of lilac under all the soil of New England,
Lilac in me because I am New England,
Because my roots are in it,
Because my leaves are of it,
Because my flowers are for it,
Because it is my country
And I speak to it of itself
And sing of it with my own voice
Since certainly it is mine.

Amy Lowell

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OF SUBJECTS, TYPES, FORMS, AND TECHNIQUE

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